The IUS Research Monograph #5

NANAK: The Guru
The Founder of Sikhism

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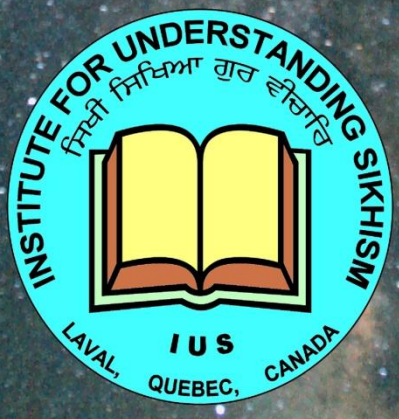

INSTITUTE FOR UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM
4418 Rue Martin-Plouffe
Laval, Quebec, H7W5L9
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Institute for Understanding Sikhism

OBJECTIVES

1. **Conduct research on Sikhism and Sikh Scriptures (Gurbani).**

2. **Promote intellectual exchange of ideas and research through seminars conferences and invited talks.**

3. **Publish peer reviewed research journal, "Understanding Sikhism -The Research Journal" online.**

4. **Publish books and monographs on Sikhism and Gurbani.**

5. **Collaborate with other non-profit educational institutions on research on Sikhism and Gurbani.**

6. **Engage with inter-faith organizations to promote a better understanding among different faith groups.**

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Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, MD
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Edited by
Mr Jesse Schell, New Zealand

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The Founder of Sikhism

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Dedicated to

The Inquisitive Minds to explore the Philosophy of Nanak – the founder of Sikhism.

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Prof Chahal gained a lot of experience about Sikhi by consulting very often the following experts: Dr Shashi Bala, Professor and Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Dr Opinderjit Takhar, University of Wolverhampton, UK, Dr Sukhraj Singh Dhillon, Dr Devinder Pal Singh, Dr Teja Singh and many more. He is also very thankful to Prof Dr Dr Ajaib Singh Brar, VC, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Prof Dr Jairup Singh, Former VC of Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar and Founding VC of Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; and Prof. Gurmohan Singh Walia, VC of Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fategarh for their encouragement for scientific and logical interpretation of Gurbani. We are also thankful to S Harcharan Singh Parhar, Editor of the *Sikh Virsa*, Calgary, Canada for prompt publication of this book on the eve of 545th Birthday of Guru Nanak which falls on November 6, 2014.

Finally, Prof Chahal is responsible if there is any misrepresentation and we would appreciate views of readers for further improvement for representation of philosophy of Guru Nanak.

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD
Laval, Quebec, Canada
30 October 2014

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Reproduced from Ref. 22. 20

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Reproduced from Ref. 7. 21

MESSAGE

I have been asked to write a few lines to inspire people to pay attention to the bani of Guru Nanak Inspiring people to do something that they are not already doing is very difficult.

Who are the people that I am trying to inspire? What am I trying to inspire them to do? And, how do I go about doing it?

Let me answer the second question first. I am trying to get people to correctly understand the bani or philosophy of Guru Nanak. The logical questions that follow are first, why do I think it is imperative for people to learn about Nanak's philosophy and second, what benefits will people get from understanding the philosophy of Nanak, and then subsequently use it?

Nanak (or Guru Nanak as he is referred to with respect by Sikhs) was of the conviction that to achieve the maximum experience / interaction with the total environment, each individual man / woman / child needs to be in good physical and mental status at all times. Guru Nanak's philosophy is the core that inspires people to achieve and maintain an excellent physical and mental status. An analysis of the day-to-day concerns of individuals are reflected in their philosophy, as well as in the larger perspectives which a person ponders about – God, the universe, the beginning of it all, the function of life, the function of human beings; all are detailed by Guru Nanak to varying degrees with clear directives. His philosophy does not restrict anyone from achieving the maximum she/he can, but cautions one of the effects (of the methodology adopted, and the degree pursued) on the physical and mental status of the individual. Hence, it can be said that Nanak's philosophy is not simply a list of do(s) and don't(s).

Furthermore, it becomes apparent upon understanding Guru Nanak and his philosophy that each person ought to deal with day to day issues head-on, living life to the fullest by the outright shunning / doing away with superstitions and useless rituals, disregarding next-life concerns (which he considered non-issue and immaterial at best), and dismantling fears associated with day-to-day living. The psychological safety net provided by this philosophy ensures that the individual does everything with full confidence, never having to resort to second guessing her/himself, or regretting any action taken.

This philosophy delineates the relationships / interactions between the self (concept of the self or individualism), others, the environment (all things outside of the self, as well as all things including the self), the source (commonly referred to as God) of the beginnings, and the logical endings to all.

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Going back to the first question - who are the people that I am trying to inspire? Two groups stand out to me. Group A is comprised of individuals who have no knowledge of Guru Nanak and his philosophy. Group B includes individuals who have knowledge about the subject, but the base of knowledge does not reflect a correct understanding of the subject in-depth consequently they are unable to benefit from the philosophy.

The final question is how do I go about getting people to learn about Guru Nanak and his philosophy?

The question that comes to mind is how to pass on correct information effectively (with the resultant change in behavior) to people who are interested to learn, and to use the philosophy?

The authors and the team at *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* (IUS) have diligently written a comprehensive introductory booklet about Guru Nanak and his philosophy ***Nanak: The Guru: The Founder of Sikhi(sm)***. The booklet is written in an easy-to-understand format. It is not another ploy wherein the reader is asked to believe in things that make no sense in the final analysis. Guru Nanak was one hundred percent against blind faith. He believed in use of reasoning and logic, and hence his life's work and writings are full of the questions and challenges which he posed, with the goal to have traditions / meaningless beliefs and superstitions nullified. The *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* has adopted the approach used by Guru Nanak of using reasoning and logic, to understand his philosophy (bani) which was based on the totality of his life style, thinking, interactions with people, and interactions and understanding of his total environment. The use of science as a tool has helped to clarify what were otherwise vague concepts, and totally dependent on the individual's experiences and can only be taken for what her/ his words are worth.

The concepts explained are precise and leave no room for the need to use a double-standard to resolve conflicting conclusions as is common in interpretations that are biased or based on blind faith and faulty logic.

The content also reflects insights into Guru Nanak's thoughts, style of living, commitment to humanity, and individual uplift.

The IUS personnel and their network of resources are familiar with the subject matter in its true perspective, and are an accessible support group.

To assist the maximum number of people to live a life of joy, contentment, as well as to excel in their fields of endeavor, is the objective of publishing this booklet. It is my personal vision that the knowledge contained in this booklet will enable and empower the individuals referred to as Groups A and B to become conversant with the philosophy,

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thereby to create and expand support groups which will spearhead the campaign of passing on the correct philosophy to others.

The IUS is working on interpretation of the bani of Guru Nanak with the application of science and logic in series of books. The current booklet will be followed by the next book, ਜਪੁ (JAP)- the first bani of Guru Nanak, which may appear in mid of 2015.

Now, let me turn the tables, and pose a question / challenge to you: What are you willing to give up to receive - excellent physical and mental benefits for the rest of your life? Invest an hour of your time to read and understand and all the good things will come for free – and I literally mean for free!

Raj Rattan Singh Chawla, PhD
Victorville, California, U.S.A.
25 October 2014

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FOREWORD

In the present era of science and technology, religion is still the greatest single factor which influences people. For Western people religion has still the original Latin meaning - to bind or a relationship. But for the people of the East, religion is *Dharma*, a support and a way of life. The study of religious concepts is essential for it guides and enriches the social and individual life of the people. The doctrine of every religion consists of some basic concepts which are the result of the experiences of its prophets, holy persons or thinkers. In Sikhism these concepts have been expounded by Guru Nanak and elaborated by his successors to the 'House of Nanak'.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi(sm), was a great preceptor and a mystic prophet of extraordinary foresight. With his remarkable gift of intuition, he brought forth revelations and contributed meaningful generic thought to our understanding of the phenomena of life and the universe. Guru Nanak's life is full of examples which confirm his critical thought, intellectual attitude and revolt against despotic authority. He exhibited a scientific spirit in his spiritual life as well as in his dealing with humanity.

A scientist of international stature and a noted Sikh theologian, Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, is a founder member of the School of Scientific and Logical Interpretation of Gurbani – *The Institute for Understanding Sikhism*. He is committed to bring out the scientific, rational and logical truth of Gurbani in the modern context. With his scientific training and firm religious faith, he is eminently qualified to do so. He is also a strong proponent of Nanakian Philosophy. With publication of his book titled '*Nanakian Philosophy – Basics for Humanity*' (2008), he has made a laudable contribution in this field.

Prof Chahal adheres that Nanakian Philosophy is perennial and universal in its approach to the problems of life and is most suitable for humanity in the present era. In this booklet '*Nanak: the Guru – the Founder of Sikhi*' (2014), he in collaboration with Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, MD, Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, MD, both from USA and Mr Jesse Schell from New Zealand has tried to bring this truth to the limelight. He asserts that Guru Nanak was not only a great inspirer of altruism, egalitarianism and divinity but was a great philosopher and rationalist of the period of the Renaissance.

This publication unfolds several facets of Guru Nanak's life. The era of turmoil at the time of his birth, his search for Truth, the process of his spiritual enlightenment and his travels are well described in this booklet. Guru Nanak's mission and its continuance, Nanakian philosophy and its basic principles, Guru Nanak's concept of God and his delineation about the physical world are also depicted well in it. The authors have portrayed the philosophy of Guru Nanak in a scientific and logical manner to bring out its

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real perspective.

According to Prof Chahal science and religion are not polarized in Guru Nanak's hymns. The grandeur of secular scientific discoveries reveals the absolute magnificence and power of the sacred. The interrogative technique is very much at the heart of Guru Nanak's bani, and is extremely valuable in that it instills freedom and creativity in the minds of its votaries. The authors are well aware of the fact that their interpretation of Gurbani is not absolute, but they are open to reason and welcome debate and discussion to settle the issue.

Prof Chahal laments the fact that even about 545 years after the birth of Guru Nanak, there are no definite details available (except a few in his hymns) for his travels and discussions held during these travels. His own research in this context has yielded inconclusive results. Thus he emphasizes that there is a dire need to take up serious research projects in this direction. It is suggested that the Sikh institutions / organizations, the world over, should pool their resources to fund such projects, so that humanity could benefit from the true life history and the unique philosophical contributions of this great savant.

Guru Nanak's bani uphold definite moral and spiritual goals. Its scientific mode of inquiry, its universality, its inculcation of the values of justice, compassion and love for all, is in nutshell, the essence of Sikhi(sm). This booklet on '*Nanak: The Guru – The Founder of Sikhi'* is a splendid addition to Sikh scholarship. Prof Chahal in collaboration with Dr Thind and Dr Dhaliwal bring his expertise in the area of natural and physical sciences to the Guru Nanak's sacred bani and offers an exciting bridge between religious studies and the natural and physical sciences. This exploration of the symbiosis of science and religion is a dire need of our times. I hope Prof Chahal's pioneering effort to present Guru Nanak's message in modern context, will be received with serious attention from Sikh Diaspora.

Devinder Pal Singh, Ph. D.
Center for Understanding Sikhism
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
28 October 2014

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PREFACE

Many books and articles have already been written about Guru Nanak's life and his contributions. Some present him as a mystic man and a prophet sent by God for the welfare of humanity; others write that he was a reformer and follower of the Bhagati Movement so much so that some say that he was a follower of Bhagat Kabir. Still others are of the view that he was creating a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. Currently the general trend is to represent him as a preacher of Vedantic philosophy, although even those who present him in this way admit that on certain points he differed from Hinduism.

A critical analysis of the literature indicates that there is a great need to represent him based upon his philosophy as embodied in his bani. However, the various interpretations of his bani currently available have been done under the shadow of Vedanta. We, however, have interpreted his bani by using the application of science and logic to represent the real theme / philosophy in it.

Now the question is:
Who is Nanak?

In this book it has been tried to represent Nanak as the Guru based on the Gurbani incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. In our subsequent books his bani will be interpreted by using the application of science and logic. Some of the basic principles of his philosophy are presented in this book.

To comprehend the truth in the bani as written and promulgated by Guru Nanak, one must compare the results of preconceived opinions of the 'Unknown' by historical interpreters which are based on theology against the scientific approach appreciated and adapted by Guru Nanak himself. He applied all the evidence including historical; and religious literature and religious praxis in search of the truth. He came to the realization that the ultimate explanation of reality lies in accepting the freedom of natural phenomena (*Hukm*-ਹੁਕਮੁ) and living by (ਮੰਨੈ) it. This book is only an introduction to the founder of Sikhi(sm) and its basic principles.

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi(sm) (1469-1539 CE), was a divinely inspired, well-educated by the mentors of Islam and Hinduism, and extensively travelled person who, at very young age, had realized the 'Truth' about the Reality - God and natural phenomena. From his writings incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Scripture, it becomes obvious that through discourses, discussions and observation of the praxis in various religions, he discovered religious mentors deluged with ego (*haumae* ਹਉਮੈY),

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promulgating nothing more than chaos by indulging in self- serving gains.

Knowing that humanity in general has the capacity to be deceived or deceives itself by believing in anything but the truth; most religious authorities with their clever, but often abstruse meanings have shielded the ancient interpretations of the Reality from humanity. They have promulgated the presence of a fearful and judgmental God in the very midst of human ignorance, doubts, fears, and sinfulness. It was these superfluous and superstitious beliefs of which Guru Nanak and the succeeding Sikh Gurus did not approve. For these reasons this booklet has been written and published using critical analysis *(Bibek Budhi)* to evaluate "historical theology" and the false promulgation of religious ethos.

This booklet reflects the brief life history of Guru Nanak, the political and religious chaos in India during early 15th and 16th century, the travels of Guru Nanak, and the declaration and honoring of Nanak as the Guru. It also discusses the story of the revelation to Guru Nanak when he emerged out of Vein rivulet after three days and the story about the succession of Bhai Lehna to the 'House of Nanak'. All other fictitious stories about his life, found in various *Janam Sakhis* (biographies), have been avoided.

The question of whether the philosophy of Guru Nanak is original and unique has also been explained in brief.

The Gurbani phrases or Sabds and their transliterations have been copied with permission from www.srigranth.org, maintained by Dr Kulbir Singh's son, Jasjeet Singh Thind. The interpretations of these phrases and Sabd are either by the authors or by some other authors and in that case their names are mentioned at appropriate places. The manuscript has been critically edited by Mr Jesse Schell from New Zealand to make it understandable by native English speakers in Western countries.

The Authors
Laval, Quebec, Canada
25 October 2014

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AUTHORS AND EDITOR

THE AUTHORS

Professor Devinder Singh Chahal

Professor Devinder Singh Chahal obtained his PhD (Microbiology) from the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio and University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois, USA in 1966. He established a new Department of Microbiology at the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. He left this institute in 1974 from the position of Professor and Head and joined as a Visiting Scientist in the Department Food and Chemical Engineering at the prestigious institution, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, Massachusetts as a Fulbright Fellow, a prestigious award, for one year. In 1975 Professor Chahal came to Canada as an immigrant. He served for 5 years at the University of Waterloo, Ontario as a Visiting Professor and then as Visiting Scientist in the Department of Biochemical Engineering. Then he moved to the Institut Armand-Frappier, Université du Québec, Laval, Québec, and retired from there as a Professor of Industrial Microbiology in 1996.

He discovered two new species of fungi: *Agaricus basiannulosis,* an edible mushroom and *Chaetomium cellulolyticum* Chahal & Hawksworth, a very active microorganism to convert cellulosic matter into useful products. The later has been studied by many MSc and PhD students in the world. During his professional life he wrote three scientific books and one laboratory manual as well as many chapters in various scientific books and many research articles in international scientific journals. He has presented his research, especially on Bio-energy and Enzymes Production at many international conferences held in various parts of the world. During his scientific professional life he developed a few processes to produce valuable chemicals from waste biomass. He has five patents on these processes in Canada, the USA and India.

Outside his busy professional life he has written many articles on the *scientific and logical interpretation of Gurbani* (Word of the Sikh Gurus) with special reference to the *universally acceptable philosophy of Guru Nanak,* these having been published in various international journals and in many multi-authored books. He has also written critical analyses of some works on Sikhism and *Gurbani*. He continues this service through the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism*, as its President and the Editor-in-Chief of *Understanding Sikhism: The Research Journal* which is published twice a year.

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He is a member of the Advisory Committee of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Study Centre at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar since 2011.
He was at 77th and 67th position in the list of *The Top Most Influential Sikhs of the World* of 2012 and 2013, respectively, as the author for his writings on science and on the Universally Acceptable Philosophy of Guru Nanak. He has been honoured by the SGPC, Amritsar; by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Management Committee, New Delhi on Khalsa Fateh Divas held at Red Fort, Delhi on March 8-9, 2014; and by the Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh, Punjab.

He has published 4 books and many articles about Nanakian Philosophy and thirteen (13) DVDs, about 45 minutes each on '***Discussion on Sikhism***'.

Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, MD

Dr Kulbir S Thind, MD is a medical doctor who is a staff physician at the VA Medical Center, San Francisco, USA, since August 1981. He has made a number of contributions to Punjabi/Sikh causes. Since 1984, he has been producing and distributing, free of charge, Gurmukhi/Hindi fonts for computers (Macs & PCs). In the early 1990's, he spearheaded the development of the Gurbani-CD project which led to the computerization of the text of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and a number of its translations. He also developed computer databases relating to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib along with many other specialized files of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib text to assist Sikh scholars to use Gurbani text on the computer as well as on the internet. He converted the Sri Guru Granth Sahib files to Devnagri (Hindi) and did a phonetic transliteration of the text of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He has also contributed to the making of many Guru Granth Sahib-related web-sites and formatted the translations of the Bhai Manmohan Singh and Dr Sant Singh Khalsa sentence by sentence.

Dr Thind has made major contributions to the http://www.srigranth.org web-site which is maintained by his son, Jasjeet Singh Thind. This web-site is an advanced search engine and a repository of many translations and *teekas* of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib in an interactive format.

Dr. Thind has received many awards relating to his Gurbani projects, from a number of different organizations, including SGPC, Amritsar.

Dr A. S. Dhaliwal, MD, MS, FACS

Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, MD, MS, FACS, has been involved in research and interpretations of Gurbani for more than thirty years. He pioneered the interpretation of the Sabd, "*Mitti Musalman Ki…* (2009)" in the proper way as compared to centuries old misinterpretations. His articles describing doctrines of Gurbani on topics like "*Sunn*",

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"Soul", "*Simran*", "Heavens" and others have been published in "the *Sikh Review*-Kalkota" and "*Understanding Sikhism – The Research Journal*, Laval, Canada."

Born into a Sikh family from Punjab, India, he migrated to the USA in 1967. He retired in 2003 as an Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery from ETSU, School of Medicine, Johnson City, Tennessee. He is self-educated in Sikh literature, in the interpretations of Gurbani in both English as well as Gurmukhi, and he studied the syllabus books of the 'Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana. He has attended several "Interfaith conferences," presented papers on the Sikh topics in the Parliament of World Religions, Barcelona (2004) and Melbourne, Australia (2009).

He is presently associated with the "Institute of Understanding Sikhism", Laval, Canada; and is Associate Editor of "*Understanding Sikhism – The Research Journal*."

THE EDITOR

Mr Jesse Schell

Mr Jesse Schell, born and raised in the West, values the importance of scientific enquiry and freedom of thought. Trained and educated in the sciences, he holds two degrees in nursing. He is also trained as English as a Second Language teacher with a CELTA degree from Cambridge University. This background and experience in science and language has allowed him to contribute to this work of Dr Chahal. A religious/spiritual seeker all of his life, Mr Schell has studied a number of religions and spiritual practices over the years. After much study, questioning, and serious thought it was clear that sound reasoning overcomes blind faith and so he always found himself abandoning each religion. He now describes himself as a secular humanist with Deist leanings, a free-thinker while being 'iconoclastic for good reasons'.

He finds that the current state of Sikhism is deplorable, demonstrating all the reasons why religion is evil. None-the-less, he feels a strong attraction to the original teachings of Guru Nanak (not current Sikhism) and it is for this reason that he has given generously of his time and abilities to further Dr Chahal's most important and greatly needed scholarly work. Currently, he lives in rural New Zealand, practicing self-sufficiency with his husband and their five dogs.

* * * * *

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NANAK: THE GURU,
The Founder of Sikhism

INTRODUCTION

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Who is Nanak?

Some have presented Nanak as a Sufi (mystic man in Islam), a follower of the Bhagati Movement, a social reformer while some Sikh and non-Sikh writers had misunderstood his philosophy and labelled him as the founder of Sikhism - the hybridization of Hinduism and Islam. In this booklet, Nanak has been represented as the Guru and the Founder of the unique philosophy called Sikhi, which has been anglicized as Sikhism.

Political and Social Disorder at the Time of Guru Nanak

The Lodhi Dynasty ruled parts of Northern India, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from 1451 to 1526. It ended because of the continuous attacks by Rana Sanga of Mewar and later by Babur, the Turco-Mongol invader from Uzbekistan [1]. Under these circumstances, the political and social disorder was at the lowest ebb. Guru Nanak lived during this time and has described it as follows:

ਕਲਿ[1] ਕਾਤੀ[2] ਰਾਜੇ[3] ਕਾਸਾਈ[4] ਧਰਮੁ[5] ਪੰਖ[6] ਕਰਿ[7] ਉਡਰਿਆ[8] ॥

Kal kāṯī rāje kāsā▫ī ḏẖaram pankẖ kar udri▫ā.
This is the time[1] when the kings[3] have knives[2] in their hands like butchers[4] (time of political and civil disorder) and righteousness has flown[8] away like a winged bird[6, 7].

ਕੂੜੁ[9] ਅਮਾਵਸ[10] ਸਚੁ[11] ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ[12] ਦੀਸੈ[13] ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ[14] ਚੜਿਆ[15] ॥

Kūṛ amāvas sacẖ cẖanḏarmā ḏīsai nāhī kah cẖaṛi▫ā.
The moon[12] of truth[11] has been covered (darkened)[10] with falsehood[9] and that moon which was supposed to enlighten the darkness (night) is not seen[13,15] anywhere[14].

ਹਉ[16] ਭਾਲਿ[17] ਵਿਕੁੰਨੀ[18] ਹੋਈ ॥

Ha▫o bẖāl vikunnī ho▫ī.

ਆਧੇਰੈ[19] ਰਾਹੁ[20] ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

Āḏẖārai rāhu na ko▫ī.
I[16] am worried[18] about finding[17] the way[20] in this darkness[19] (situation as described above).

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ਵਿਚਿ ਹਉਮੈ[21] ਕਰਿ ਦੁਖੁ[22] ਰੋਈ[23] ॥

vicẖ ha▫umai kar ḏukẖ ro▫ī.

ਕਹੁ[24] ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਨਿ[25] ਬਿਧਿ[26] ਗਤਿ[27] ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥

Kaho Nānak kin biḏẖ gaṯ ho▫ī. ||1||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 145.

The people are suffering[22] and crying[23] as the result of their egoistic actions[21].
Nanak says[24] how to find that[25] way[26] with which he can eliminate[27] such suffering?
AGGS, M 1, p 145.

Farooqi [2], while describing the opinion of Iqbal about Guru Nanak, described the political and social disorder at the time of Guru Nanak as follows:
"This was a time when the Hindus were hopelessly divided among themselves and were dominated by the Lodhi dynasty of Afghans who had established themselves at Delhi. Hinduism had become a set of formalities and ceremonies. The object of the religious formalities was no longer understood or sought to be understood. The Hindus worshipped the elements and incarnations of God in various forms. Even many a Muslim had lost touch with the real spirit of their revolutionary religion and were going to the mosques as if to repeat certain set of Arabic words without understanding or seeking to understand their import."

Farooqi continues to write that:
"Such were the times when Guru Nanak appeared and it was given to him to reform the society as he found it. As pointed out above, political lawlessness, social confusion, religious corruption, moral degradation and spiritual slavery were the order of the day. No doubt, Rama Nand, Gorakh and Kabir had already introduced reforms in northern India to raise the people from this spiritual lethargy; but they utterly failed to perceive the true principles of reform. That Guru Nanak succeeded in bringing about the much needed reform is sufficiently clear in the History of Sikhs and the History of Punjab by late Syed Muhammad Latif [3]."

Guru Nanak, in view of the existential reality and the principles of belief prevailing in India, laid the seed of magnanimous moral action and revolutionized the religious praxis into a new and unique system, 'Sikhi' (anglicized 'Sikhism'), as explained by Guru Arjan:

ਬਲਿਓ[1] ਚਰਾਗੁ[2] ਅੰਧਜਜਾਰ[3] ਮਹਿ ਸਭ[4] ਕਲਿ[5] ਉਧਰੀ[6] ਇਕ ਨਾਮ[7] ਧਰਮ[8] ॥

Bali▫o cẖarāg anḏẖ▫yār mėh sabẖ kal uḏẖrī ik nām ḏẖaram.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1387.

Here ਨਾਮ (*Naam*) means *hukm*, law.

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Here ਧਰਮ (*Dhara*m) means duty, good deeds, virtues, righteousness, justice.

Guru Nanak has lit[1] a lamp[2] (formulated) the laws[7] of righteousness/justice[8] to remove the ignorance[3] of the whole[4] of humanity[5] to enable them to cross[6] the sea of life.
AGGS, M 5, p 1387.

Keeping in view the above theme, Cunningham has also reported that before Guru Nanak many religious reformers appeared on Indian soil to improve the political and social disorder as follows ([4] p -34):
"They aimed chiefly at emancipation from priesthood, or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious association of contented quietists or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon the people to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel and to arise a new people, freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent, rather than planted the germs of nation and their sets remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for Guru Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor, "Gowind", to fire the mind of his countrymen with a new nationality and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes and aspirations."

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BRIEF LIFE HISTORY

Finding real facts about Guru Nanak's life is like finding a lost ring in murky water. The followers of Sikhi have distorted the facts of his life by creating many myths around him. The following brief life-history of Guru Nanak is based on the writing of Dawe [5] in *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Nanak was born on Vaisakh Sudi (days of the waxing of the moon) 3, 1526 Bikrami (April 15, 1469 CE) at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi, now called **Nankana Sahib**, about 65 Km southwest of Lahore, in what is now Pakistan (Fig. 1). His father, Mehta Kalu, was a Patwari, an accountant of land revenue, in the government. However, Cunningham ([4] p 35) reported that he was grain merchant. His mother was Bibi Tripta. He had an elder sister called 'Nanaki'. However, most Sikhs celebrate his *Parkash Divas* (birthday) on *Pooranmashi* (the day of the full moon) of *Kartak* 1526 *Bikrami* [*Kartak* is the month in Indian (*Bikrami*) calendar which falls during the months of October and November]. It was Karam Singh, a Sikh Historian, who tried to convince the Sikhs that Guru Nanak was born on April 15, 1469 [6]. Although a new Nanakshahi calendar has been adopted by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar, still the SGPC could not change the celebration of Birthday in April because pressure from *Sants* and *Babas* (religious leaders of various groups) and other organizations.

Figure 1: Gurdwara Sahib Nankana Sahib. Birth place of Guru Nanak.
Photo by: Prof DS Chahal

There is every possibility that Nanak was actually born at his mother's ancestral village Chahal near Lahore. In those days at the time of child birth, mothers usually went to their

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parent's home for the delivery of the baby and would stay there for some time afterwards [7]. Cunningham ([4] note # 1, p 35) had the same idea that the ancestral village of Guru Nanak's mother was Kanakatch about 15 miles south of Lahore and that Nanak was born there.

Nanak's father is usually addressed as 'Mehta Kalu'. In fact, it should be named as 'Kalu Mehta' since 'Mehta' is a surname, which is one of several sub-castes among Hindus. Most of the writings about Guru Nanak refer his sub-caste as 'Bedi' based on *Bachitar Nantak* and writings of Bhai Gurdas, Vaaran [8].

Guru Nanak was married to Bibi Sulakhani, daughter of Mulchand Chona of Batala on Bhadon Sudi 7, 1544 Bikrami (September 24, 1487 CE). He fathered two sons, Sri Chand (b.1494 CE) and Lakhmi Das (b 1497 CE) [5].

Kshitichandra Chakravarty, a lawyer by profession, was attracted to teachings of Guru Nanak. He wrote, *NANK*, a biography in which he hails him as a harbinger of the Bhakti movement [9].

In Search of Truth

According to Prof John Bowker, editor, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, "… that revelation is always contingent—that is, no matter how strong the claims may be that a particular text or collection of texts comes from heaven or from God, it is always related to the particular historical circumstances in which it first appeared. And that means, in turn, that it is related to the transmission of a particular system."[10]*

This has also been quoted by Noor in his book, "*Connecting the Dots in Sikh History*" ([11], p 21) to relate it to the story about the disappearance of Guru Nanak in the Vein rivulet.

"*After resigning his job as* Modi *of Daulit Khan Lodi's* Modikhana *(Government Store) Nanak was spending more and more time in meditation and seclusion. One day in August 1499, after the monsoon rains, he went for a bath in Vein, a rivulet, which flowed past the town of Sultanpur. He swam upstream for meditation in his favourite place in the wilderness near the riverbank. He was missing for three days. With his clothes lying on the riverbank, people believed he had drowned. Friends and family were miserable, unable to hold their tears; they hoped and prayed for the safe return. But Nanak, in quest of truth, after a mystical experience, full of inspiration and a clear vision, returned to Sultanpur, with a glow on his face and* Na ko Hindu, na ko Musalman* *on his lips. 'Where were you Nanak?' They asked.* Na ko Hindu, na ko Muslaman, *was his cryptic answer to that and every other question*."

*There is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim.

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Dawe [5] also narrated this story that one day Guru Nanak failed to appear for work following his early morning ablutions at the bank of the river Vein which flowed past the town of Sultanpur. He had been missing for three days and nights, and it was feared that he had drowned. Rapt contemplation of God had brought him to an intimate communion with the Divine. He seemed to have received a call to go forth into the wider world to preach the vision vouchsafed to him. The *Puratan Janam Sakhi* describes his mystical experience in terms of direct encounter with the Divine; also, Bhai Gurdas [8] who says, *Vaar*, 1.24, that Guru Nanak was invested with his commission in *Sach Khand*, the Abode of the Eternal One. The first words Guru Nanak uttered on reappearance were: "*There is no Hindu, there is no Muslaman*."

This story is also accepted by the SGPC, that at the age of 38, on August 1507, Guru Nanak Sahib heard God 's call to dedicate himself to the service of humanity after bathing in the Vein rivulet Near Sultanpur Lodhi. The very first sentence which he ' uttered then was, "*There is no Hindu, no Musalman*" [12].

But Udham Singh on the other hand emphasized that Guru Nanak uttered '*Waheguru', 'Waheguru'* after appearing from the Vein rivulet.([13], p 54). In some stories, Guru Nanak uttered the '*Mool Mantra*' while in others he recited the whole '*JAP*', the first bani. In some stories, he remained in water for three days. In some stories, the year is 1507 while in others it is 1499. There are such diverse opinions on this episode.

Many Sikh scholars like Noor have tried to prove that Nanak received a revelation or enlightenment at the age of 30 when he came out of the Vein rivulet as if he had no knowledge of spirituality or vision before. Noor ([11], p-21-24) has tried unsuccessfully to justify the above statement as truly said by Nanak. On the other hand, some scholars also tried unsuccessfully to justify the episode at the Vein rivulet and the disappearance of Nanak for three days by quoting the following verse of Guru Nanak, saying that during these three days Nanak was in the court of God:

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Ha▫o dẖādẖī vekār kārai lā▫i▫ā.

ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

Rāṯ ḏihai kai vār ḏẖarahu furmā▫i▫ā.

ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਲਿ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

Dẖādẖī sacẖai mahal kẖasam bulā▫i▫ā.

ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

Sacẖī sifaṯ sālāh kapṛā pā▫i▫ā.

ਸਚਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਆਇਆ ॥

Sacẖā amriṯ nām bẖojan ā▫i▫ā.

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ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਖਾਧਾ ਰਜਿ ਤਿਨਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ

Gurmaṯī kẖāḏẖā raj ṯin sukẖ pā▫i▫ā.

ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥

Ḏẖāḏẖī kare pasā▫o sabaḏ vajā▫i▫ā.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੨੭॥ ਸੁਧੁ ॥

Nānak sacẖ sālāhi pūrā pā▫i▫ā. ||27|| suḏẖu

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 150 (AGGS, M 1, p 150) [14].

Its literal Translation by Manmohan Singh (SGPC, Publication) from "srigranth.org" is given as follows [15]. However, there is great need to interpret it in its real perspective to discover the real message of Guru Nanak in this verse:

"*Me, the bard out of work, the Lord has applied to His service.*
In the very beginning He gave me the order to sing His praises night and day.
The Master summoned the minstrel to His True Court.
He clothed me with the robe of His true Honour and eulogy.
Since then the True Name has become my ambrosial food.
They, who under the Guru's instruction eat this food to their satisfaction, obtain peace.
By singing the Guru's hymns, I the minstrel spread the Lord's glory.
Nanak, by praising the True Name I have obtained the perfect Lord."

Sant Singh interpreted the same as follows copied from "srigranth.org" [15] :

"I was without any work but God engaged me as minister (minstrel).
When God summoned me in Its true court, God ordained me right from the beginning whether it is day or night praise (the God).
God dressed me with the robe of truth.
God served me the food, the elixir of Naam.
Those Guru-oriented who ate this food (of Naam) attained all the pleasures and peace.
Now I, the minister, is disseminating the teachings loudly.
Nanak has attained the Perfect (God) by praising the True God."

Here I am quoting this verse just to show that if we look into the above verse critically we do not find even slightest hint, which could justify that Guru Nanak could have said, *"Na ko Hindu na ko Muslaman."*, or he uttered the "*Mool Mantra*", recited the "JAP", or uttered "Waheguru". There is also no indication in this verse that Nanak was in the court of God during those three days when he disappeared in the Vein rivulet.

Moreover, our research of the Gurbani indicates that Guru Nanak has not declared anywhere such a statement and even close to that of "*Na ko Hindu, na ko Muslaman*"(neither there is a Hindu nor a Muslim) in his bani incorporated in the AGGS. However, it was Guru Arjan who has said it entirely in different way, "*Na hum Hindu na*

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Muslaman" ("I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim") in his following verse ([16] p 16-17):

ਵਰਤ[1] ਨ ਰਹਉ[2] ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ[3] ॥

varaṯ na raha▫o na mah ramḏānā.

ਤਿਸੁ[4] ਸੇਵੀ[5] ਜੋ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ[6] ॥੧॥

Ŧis sevī jo rakẖai niḏānā. ||1||

ਏਕੁ[7] ਗੁਸਾਈ[8] ਅਲਹੁ[9] ਮੇਰਾ ॥

Ėk gusā▫ī alhu merā.

ਹਿੰਦੂ[10] ਤੁਰਕ[11] ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ[12] ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Hinḏū ṯurak ḏuhā'n neberā. ||1|| rahā▫o.

ਹਜ[13] ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ[14] ਪੂਜਾ[15] ॥

Haj kābai jā▫o na ṯirath pūjā.

ਏਕੋ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ॥੨॥

Ėko sevī avar na ḏūjā. ||2||

ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ[16] ॥

Pūjā kara▫o na nivāj gujāra▫o.

ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ[17] ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ[18] ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ[19] ॥੩॥

Ėk nirankār le riḏai namaskāra▫o. ||3||

ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥

Nā ham hinḏū na musalmān.

ਅਲਹ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ[20] ਪਰਾਨ[21] ॥੪॥

Alah rām ke pind parān. ||4||

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ[22] ॥

Kaho Kabīr ih kī▫ā vakẖānā.

ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ[23] ਖੁਦਿ[24] ਖਸਮੁ[25] ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੫॥੩॥

Gur pīr mil kẖuḏ kẖasam pacẖẖānā. ||5||3||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1136.

I do not practice[2] the fasts[1] (of Hindus), nor do I observe the month of Ramadaan[3] (the Roza[3]).
I serve[5] only the One[4], who protects all till the end of life[6]. 1.
My God is only One[7], Who is called Gosain[8] (by the Hindus) and Allah[9] (by the Muslims).
I have separated[12] myself from (religious practices) of them both, the Hindus[10] and the Muslims[11]. Pause.

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I do not make pilgrimages[13] to Mecca, nor do I worship[15] at Hindu sacred shrines[14].
I serve no other than the Only One. 2.
I do not perform Hindu worship, nor do I offer[16] the Muslim prayers.
I have understood in my mind[18] and pay my obeisance[19] to the One, the Formless[17]. 3.
I am neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim.
My body[20] and life[21] belong to the One (who is) Allah (for Muslims) and Ram (for Hindus). 4.
Oh Kabir! This is what I say[22]:
That the one-self[24] can realize[26] the God[25] through Guru - Pir (Spiritual Teacher)[23].5. 3.
AGGS, M 5, p 1136. ([16] p 16-17)

In the above verse, Guru Arjan, based on the philosophy of Guru Nanak, declared, "*I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim*". This is the Nanakian Philosophy that the Sikh Gurus and the disciples (the Sikhs) of Guru Nanak are neither Hindus nor Muslims. This phrase, "*I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim*" is quite different than that being quoted in the above story about Guru Nanak declaring "*There is neither Hindu nor Muslim*".

Before Guru Arjan, Bhagat Kabir had alienated himself from the practices of the Hindus and the Muslims:

ਉਲਟਿ ਜਾਤਿ ਕੁਲ ਦੋਊ ਬਿਸਾਰੀ ॥

Ulat jāṯ kul ḏo▫ū bisārī.

ਸੁੰਨ ਸਹਜ ਮਹਿ ਬੁਨਤ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥੧॥ |

Sunn sahj mėh buna‌ṯ hamārī. ||1|

ਹਮਰਾ ਝਗਰਾ ਰਹਾ ਨ ਕੋਊ ॥

Hamrā jẖagrā rahā na ko▫ū.

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਛਾਡੇ ਦੋਊ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Pandi‌ṯ mulā'n cẖẖāde ḏo▫ū. ||1|| rahā▫o.

ਬੁਨਿ ਬੁਨਿ ਆਪ ਆਪੁ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਉ ॥

Bun bun āp āp pahirāva▫o.

ਜਹ ਨਹੀ ਆਪੁ ਤਹਾ ਹੋਇ ਗਾਵਉ ॥੨॥

Jah nahī āp ṯahā ho▫e gāva▫o. ||2||

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਜੋ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੀਆ ॥

Pandi‌ṯ mulā'n jo likẖ ḏī▫ā.

ਛਾਡਿ ਚਲੇ ਹਮ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਲੀਆ ॥੩॥

Cẖẖāḏ cẖale ham kacẖẖū na lī▫ā. ||3||

ਰਿਦੈ ਇਖਲਾਸੁ ਨਿਰਖਿ ਲੇ ਮੀਰਾ ॥

Riḏai ikẖlās nirakẖ le mīrā.

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ਆਪੁ ਖੋਜਿ ਖੋਜਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਕਬੀਰਾ ॥੪॥੭॥

Āp kẖoj kẖoj mile kabīrā. ||4||7||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰਨਾ 1158-1159.

Here is the literal translation by Dr Sant Singh Khalsa from "SriGranth.org"[15]:
"Turning away from the world, I have forgotten both my social class and ancestry.
My weaving now is in the most profound celestial stillness. 1.
I have no quarrel with anyone. I have abandoned both the Pandits, the Hindu religious scholars, and the Mullahs, the Muslim priests. 1.
I weave and weave, and wear what I weave. Where egotism does not exist, there I sing God's Praises. 2.
Whatever the Pandits and Mullahs have written, I reject; I do not accept any of it.3.
My heart is pure, and so I have seen the Lord within.
Searching, searching within the self, Kabeer has met the Lord. 4. 7."
AGGS, Kabir, p 1158-59.

Both verses of Guru Arjan and of Bhagat Kabir do not support the statement, "There is no Hindu, no Musalman". The emphasis is that neither Guru Arjan nor Bhagat Kabir accepted or practiced any concept of Hinduism or of Islam. Now it becomes the duty of Sikh researchers and theologians to represent the revelation to Guru Nanak in its real perspective while keeping in view his bani, especially the above verse, ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥ (Ha▫o dẖāḏẖī vekār kārai lā▫i▫ā.) [*To me, the bard out of work, the Lord has applied to His service.*]

Although Dawe [5] has also narrated the above story, he described Nanak as a precocious child, showing early maturity of mind, who even at the age of five questioned the purpose of life. On the other hand, he was a dreamy child often indifferent to his studies and inattentive to everyday duties. He did not settle for the routine observance of rituals and rules. He refused to wear *janeu* [Sacred thread worn around the neck and under one arm] at the age of about 8 or 9, a ritual to initiate a person as a Hindu. His family was worried that Nanak was emotionally or physically ill. A physician was summoned, who declared after examining him that he does not need any healing but was set for healing others. His father decided to send him to his sister, Nanaki, and her husband, Jai Ram, at Sultanpur where he served as keeper of *modikhan*a, a government storehouse, of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi. He fulfilled his duties and won admiration of everyone for his diligence. He served for more than 12 years as a keeper of the government provision store. However, he was not satisfied with this job.

So we cannot pinpoint a particular time of revelation to Guru Nanak as is explained in the disappearance in Vein rivulet at the age of about 30 or 38 years. Rather it was a continuous process of revelation right from the beginning of his life.

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Karam Singh, a Sikh historian, [6] says that there are many unscientific and illogical stories fabricated about the life of Guru Nanak. Therefore, we have avoided delving further into such stories.

Cunningham ([4] note # 2, p 35) reported from a Persian manuscript, *Siar ul Mutakharin*, that Nanak was carefully educated by Saiyid Hasan and he also studied the most approved writings of Muhammadans and learned all the earthly sciences from Khizar, i.e. the prophet Elias. It indicates that Nanak had a great vision right from the beginning and refused to accept various rituals and religious rules being practiced at his time. He started to discover the truth through dialogue with his primary school teachers and later took long voyages to have intellectual discussions with heads of various religious centers and institutes.

Travels of Guru Nanak

At the age of about 30, Guru Nanak started to undertake long travels in South Asia and Middle East to visit the heads of various religious places to know their religious philosophy and to exchange the philosophy formulated by him. These travels/voyages are called the *Udasis* of Guru Nanak.

Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [17], Sikh historians, have collated the information from various sources into three major travels as follows, however, some writers break them into five different travels:

1. From Talwandi to Sultanpur to Benaras to Dhubri to Assam to Dacca to Ceylon to Ujain to Mathura to Talwandi.
2. From Talwandi to Kailash (Sumer) Parbat to Talwandi.
3. From Talwandi (some say from Kartarpur) to Hinglaj to Mecca to Baghdad to Kabul to (Talwandi) Kartarpur.

Besides these travels there are many short ones in the Punjab and adjoining areas. The irony is that no definite dates for any travel have been given by them and no details of the discussions held during these travels, are available with the exception of some bani of Guru Nanak (*Arti, Sidh Gost, Oankaar Bani, Babar Bani,* etc.

Dawe [5] also reported in *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism* that it is difficult to establish an exact itinerary of Guru Nanak's travel. Customarily they are grouped into four lengthy journeys (*Udasis)* to the east, south, north, and west. He further said that Guru Nanak's traveling ended around 1521 with the establishment of Kartarpur. He had also mentioned that Guru Nanak was an eyewitness to the havoc created during the invasion of Saidpur (now Eminabad) in the district of Gujranwala, Pakishtan by Zahir ud-din Muhammad Babar in 1520/1521.

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Travels to the Middle East

Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [17] have mentioned that according to *Janam Sakhis* (biographies of Guru Nanak) by Meharban and Bhai Mani Singh, Guru Nanak had travelled to Palestine, Syria, and Turkey although there is no definite supporting evidence. Some writers of *Janam Sakhis* have extended his travels even to some countries in Central Asia. Nonetheless, it is evident from the information collected by Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh that the complete travels of Guru Nanak are still to be discovered.

According to Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [17], Guru Nanak boarded a boat which sailed from Sonmiani through Gulf of Eden and Red Sea to Jeddah (Al Aswad), a port near Mecca. They say that after visiting Mecca and Medina Guru Nanak traveled directly to Baghdad in Iraq then to Tehran and Kabul and finally back to (Talwandi) Kartarpur. They argued that Guru Nanak followed the direct and shortest route to Baghdad rather than the long route through Palestine, Syria, and Turkey as mentioned in some *Janam Sakhis.*

According to Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh, Guru Nanak started his travels at Talwandi, going first to Sultanpur to meet his sister before proceeding further. From Sultanpur he went to Pakpattan (Ajodhan) to renew his old contacts with Sheikh Ibrahim Farid II. He proceeded to Multan to meet Baha-ud-Din, a descendant and successor of famous Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakria, founder of Suhrawardhy Sufi Silslah in India. From Multan Guru Nanak proceeded to Uch (Deogarh). Here Guru Nanak had a meeting with Sheikh Haji Abdulla Bukhari (d. 1526 CE), a successor of Kalal-ud-Din Bhukhari. Leaving Uch Guru Nanak went to Sukkur then to Lakhpat (Basta Bander) probably by boat (in the river Sind?). Mr Sukhvir Bilkhu has reported on the Gurdwara Sahib Lakhpat [18] which was built to commemorate Guru Nanak's visit.

Guru Nanak proceeded to the seashore where at Kuriani he visited the old temples of Koteshwar and Narayna Swami. He then traveled further to Sonmiani (or simply Miani). Before boarding a boat to Mecca, he visited a Hindu temple in Hinglaj. There is a Nanak Dharamsala (inn) in this town.

However, Trilochan Singh [7] has reported that there are some indications that Guru Nanak visited Cairo (Egypt). During World War II, Sikh soldiers were shown a place on the outskirts of the town where there was a stone memorial to Guru Nanak. Captain Bhag Singh, the founding managing editor of the *Sikh Review*, was told about the existence of this monument when he was at Cairo during World War II. Unfortunately, he could not go there to confirm the information and to see it. Trilochan Singh [7] has also reported from the work of Sydney Nettleton Fisher [19] that in Egypt or in Istanbul (Turkey) Guru Nanak had met the Emperor of Rum (Ottoman), Salim (1511-1520 CE). Trilochan Singh further says that Guru Nanak might have visited Jerusalem.

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Because of a lack of any solid evidence, Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [17] further strengthened their views that the shortest route from Baghdad to Mecca for hajj (the pilgrimage) was first marked and prepared for Khalifa Harun Rashid's wife, Zubaida Begum. During 14th century, Ibn Batula adopted the same route for his journey from Baghdad to Mecca. They have ignored the fact that the passage to Palestine, Syria, and Turkey and then to Baghdad is much easier than that of direct route proposed by them. They have also ignored another fact that while in Mecca Guru Nanak was very close to the center of ancient civilization in Cairo (Egypt) and center of the Jews, Jerusalem (Israel), and a Sufi center established by Hazrat Mevlana (Moulana) Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya (Turkey), whose philosophy was very prevalent not only in the Middle East but also in India and now in the West. Since Guru Nanak has not left any place connected with Sufism, and religious centers, therefore, there is every possibility that Guru Nanak might have visited the ancient civilization in Cairo (Egypt), the Wailing Wall of Herod's temple in Jerusalem, the Sufi center started by Hazrat Mevlana (Moulana) Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya (Turkey) and he might have met the Emperor of Rum (Ottoman), Salim, in Cairo or Istanbul (Turkey).

Chahal [20] was attending an International Conference on Bio-energy in Istanbul, Turkey in 1994. On the last day of the conference all the participants went on a cruise in the Straits of Bosporus (Bosporus) connecting the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara (about 32 km) long. The Straits of Bosporus is an important place where the East ends (mainland of Turkey on the Asian continent) and the West starts (Istanbul is on the European continent). On his return from the cruise, he discovered a big monument about 12 ft high and about 5 ft wide constructed in mortar. It is situated in a public park at the shore of the Straits of Bosporus on the European continent, Istanbul, Turkey. It has some inscription in the Arabic/Persian alphabet. He found 'Nanak' inscribed at the end of the first line of its inscription. The bulk of inscription was not legible because of the effect of weathering and there are some small and big cracks, which were filled with cement. Moreover, it is in the old Turkish language in the Arabic alphabet that is difficult to read. However, he was able to read "Nanak" for sure since he knew the Arabic alphabet and took pictures of the monument with its inscription for further investigation later (Figs. 2, 3 and 4).

Further research to decipher its inscription remained dormant for 12 years until he visited Lahore, Pakistan to participate in an International Conference on Guru Nanak Heritage for Peace on February 18, 2006. He met Mr. Iqbal Qaiser, the author of the book, *Sikh Shrines in Pakistan*, and Mr. Syed Afzal Haider, senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the author of the book *Baba Nanak* (Fig. 5). These men helped Chahal to decipher the first line of the inscription, which is in Turkish language. It indicated that it is dedicated to Guru Nanak. The first line translated by Mr Iqbal Qaiser is as follows:

In Turkish language (Transliterated in Gurmukhi Script):
ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਜਮਾਂ ਹਿੰਦ ਲਤ ਅਬਦ ਅਲ ਮਾਜੀਦ ਨਾਨਕ ।

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Figure 2: Monument at the shore of Bosporus showing the name of NANAK at the end of the first line. Bosporus is a strait connecting the Mediterranean and Black sea where the East meets the West. This monument is facing toward Bosporus from the western side of Europe in the city of Istambul, Turkey.
Photo by: Prof DS Chahal

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(*Jehangir jaman hind lat abd al majid Nanak*.)
Meanings in Punjabi:

ਜਮਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਹਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ।

(*jamanay da malik, hind da banda, rab da Nanak*)

Meaning in English:
The Lord of the time, resident of India, Nanak – the man of God.

This translation encouraged Chahal to take up a research project to verify if this NANAK word really stands for Guru Nanak. If it were so, then it would confirm that Guru Nanak traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, which is often quoted in some of the biographies of Guru Nanak. The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) took up this research project on May 8 – 22, 2007 by a team of two researchers, Professor Devinder Singh Chahal and Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal in collaboration with Mr Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary, Embassy of Republic of Turkey, Ottawa. Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu and Prof Dr Suleyman Derin were appointed as the liaison officers between the Institute for Understanding Sikhism and the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Uskudar, Istanbul by the Dean, Prof Dr Raşit KÜÇÜK [21]. Their research revealed that what was apparent as NANAK is in fact KHANAK(N) in which the hook of letter *khey* of the Arabic alphabet was damaged by weathering. Therefore, the inscription has been deciphered and translated by various experts as follows:

Figure 3: Blown up view of the top portion of this monument showing "Abdul Majid Nanak". Photo by: Prof DS Chahal

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Figure 4: The other side of the same monument showing the backside, which faces the city of Istanbul, Turkey. Photo by: Prof DS Chahal

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A new translation by Dr Mudassar from Lahore was received through Mr Iqbal Qaiser as follows:
(*zamaanay ki jahaangeeri tera takht hai Abdul Majeed Khan*) ...
English translation:
*"Abdul Majeed **Khan**, the rule of the world is your throne."*
The word, which looks like NANAK, is, in fact, the wiped out word "Khan".

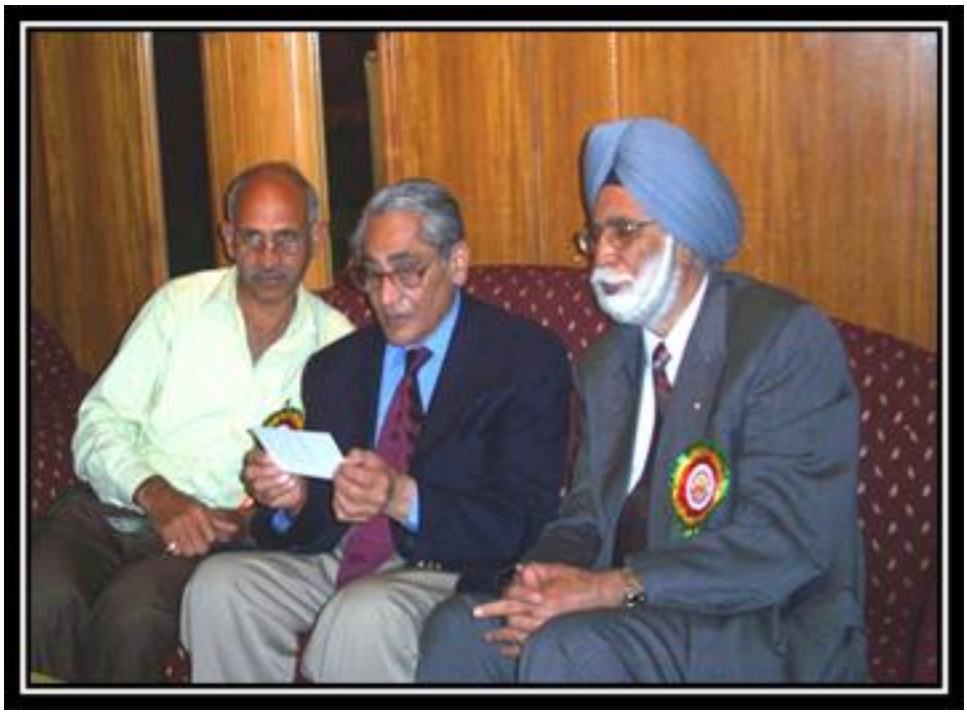

Figure 5: Mr Iqbal Qaiser, the author of the book, Sikh Shrines in Pakistan, and Mr Syed Afzal Haider, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and author of the book, Baba Nanak, translating the inscription on that monument for Prof DS Chahal.

On the other hand, the interpretation of first line sent by Mr Agat from Istanbul, the friend of Mr Tim Sibia from the UK, is as follows:
*"The changing time's ruling king to the world is Abdülmecid **Sultan**."*
Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu helped Chahal and Dhaliwal to decipher and translated the first line of that inscription as follows (Fig. 6):

Jehangir jaman ma'dalet Abd-Al-majid KHANIN (KHANAK). (Original language)
Its English translation:
"Abd-al-Majid Khan is conqueror of the world and dispenser of justice."
This interpretation appears to be more logically correct than the all others are.

Now the question is:
If the word is KHANIN or KHANAK then why it is being translated as 'Khan' or

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'Sultan'? Dr Ali Mehmedoglu says that KHAN is HAN in old Turkish language. Nevertheless, the word is easily read as KHANAK. On the other hand, he admitted that there is no word like KHANAK in Turkish language.

Figure 6: Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu translating the inscriptions on the above monument and that on the wall of Guru Nanak's Shrine in Baghdad.
Photo by: Prof DS Chahal

Could it be possible that NANAK has been inscribed as KHANAK?

In an inscription on the wall in a shrine in Baghdad Nanak has been addressed as Majeed (Mecid) as "Mecid Baba Nanak" as discussed later. Therefore, "Jehangir jaman ma'dalet Abd-Al-majid KHANIN (KHANAK)", could be interpreted as follows:
"*The servant of Allah, KHANAK (Nanak), is conqueror of the world and dispenser of justice*". These wordings are equally applicable to Guru Nanak and Abd-al-Majid Khan, who was the emperor of the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand an incomplete reference, [19], quoted by Dr Trilochan Singh ([7] p 494) indicates that Guru Nanak met Emperor of Rum, Salim (1511-1529) in Egypt or at Istanbul. A thorough research about this reference at the biggest library at the Marmara University, Uskudar, Turkey could not reveal the existence of such information quoted by Trilochan Singh about the visit of Guru Nanak with Emperor Salim.

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Chahal and Dhaliwal also visited the shrine of Sufi Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi at Konya, Turkey and held discussions with Prof Chuchuk and others professors at Selcuk University. They looked at the records at the biggest library there but could not find any reference related to the visit of Guru Nanak in Konya.

Travel from Mecca to Medina to Baghdad via Cairo, Syria and Turkey and Azerbaijan (but not directly to Baghdad as mentioned by Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh) can be justified by the presence of Commencing Verse (commonly called Mool Mantra) of the AGGS inscribed on the wall of a temple near Baku, Azerbaijan as reported by Modi in his article [22].

The inscription in Fig. 7 has been deciphered and rewritten line by line exactly the same way as it appears in the picture as follows:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਆਜੁਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਜਪੁ ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਬਾਝਾ ਜਾਟੂਸਾਰਕੁ ਥਾ **ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਲਾ** ... ਤਾਰੂ ॥

ਸਹਬਿ ਕਾ ਚੇਲਾ ... ਵਾਬ ਕੇ ਸਾਹ **ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਲਾ** ਓਹੋਸਾਹ **ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਜਗਹ ਬਨਈ**

A wild guess from the words deciphered so far indicates that the words ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਲਾ (*the disciple of whom)* have been used at least two times in 5^{th} – 7^{th} lines and then at the end there is ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਜਗਹ ਬਨਈ [*place of dharam (religion) is built*]. Is that possible that there may be two disciples or only one disciple of Guru Nanak, who have/has built this religious place. It is obvious that the ਚੇਲਾ (disciple) of Guru Nanak has tried to convey some message of Guru Nanak along with the Commencing Verse. Unfortunately, the inscription is damaged so much that complete message could not be deciphered.

It indicates that Guru Nanak was well known even in Central Asia and might have visited that temple near Baku, Azerbaijan on his way to Bagdad. It is evident from the above discussion that there are conflicting reports about the travel of Guru Nanak in the Middle East, which requires a serious research project to settle this issue. Similarly, there is a need to conduct research on the other travels of Guru Nanak throughout South Asia. Such research projects on the travels of Guru Nanak could reveal pertinent information useful to construct the real life of Guru Nanak and his mission.

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Figure 7: Inscription of the Commencing Verse (commonly called as Mool Mantra) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib on the wall of a temple near Baku, Azerbaijan. Reproduced from Ref. 22.

Guru Nanak in Baghdad

There is a small building outside of Baghdad. The inscription on its wall indicates that it is dedicated to Guru Nanak.

The present inscription is in Arabic and Turki as shown in Fig. 8:

The above inscription is seen two times on the inside wall of the shrine as shown in Plate II in Ref. 7. It appears from the picture that the top original inscription is little damaged; therefore, the same message has been again inscribed beside the old one. Moreover, this inscription is not on the stone used by Guru Nanak to sit as described by Trilochan Singh.

Its free translation given by Dr Trilochan Singh is as follows [7]:
"*Behold, a wish has been fullfilled by Holy and High Providence. That the building of Baba Nanak has been newly built with the help of seven aulat (great walis/saints). That the happy murid (committed follower) of God (Baba Nanak) has started a fountain of grace issuing new water in the land." 917 Hijri*.

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Figure 8: Inscription on the wall of Guru Nanak's Shrine in Baghdad. Reproduced from Ref. 7.

The same translation has been reported on the internet, which is based on papers by Sewaram Singh and Manjit Singh in 1969 (as reported by Chahal in Ref. # [23]). But Major Gurmukh Singh [24] has interpreted it differently:
"*Look what was wished by the Glorious Lord in His Majesty—that a new establishment be built for the saint Baba Nanak—The seven gave help and there came this chronogram: The blest disciple performed a meritorious work. May He then recompense it?*"

Chahal [23] got this inscription transliterated into the roman alphabet by Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, Professors in Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Uskudar, Turkey, as follows in Turkish language:
Gör ki murad eyledi Hazret-i Rabbı Mecid Baba Nanak fakir ola ta ki imaret-i cedid
Yediler imdad edip geldi ki tarihine Yaydı tevvab-ı icrayına inni müridun said Hicri – 917
Note: The letter 'C' without any accent is pronounced as 'J' in Turkish language.

The above inscription was translated into English by Drs Mehmedoglus as follows:
Allah the Almighty willed that this monument or building of humble Baba Nanak will be a new benevolent foundation for dissemination of wisdom. Seven saints came to help to erect this building on Hijri 917.

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Note: The numeral 'seven' (7) is auspicious number in Sufism.

The translation by Drs Mehmedoglus is quite different than that of given by others. I think the translation by Drs Mehmedoglus is more appropriate for Guru Nanak's mission of the dissemination of wisdom.

Syed Chan Shah Pir Qadri [25] reported about Guru Nanak's stay in Middle East as follows:
"*The Udasis or accounts of the travels of Baba Nanak Sahib tell us that he traveled to Mecca for the Haj. He is also said to have* ***spent six long years in Baghdad****, which was then a major centre for the Sufis. Here he studied with many leading Sufis of his day, and it is said that he was presented by the Sufis of the city with a turban as a token of respect and honor. In Baghdad, in the courtyard of the shrine of Hazrat Bahlol Danaai, a famous Sufi, there is a shrine, which mentions that Baba Nanak Sahib stayed there. The shoes, the Muslim-style prayer mat [ja-namaz] and the blanket of Baba Nanak and the copy of the Holy Qur'an which he used to regularly read, are also preserved there."*

Still in another article, "*Guru Nanak: Was he Muslim*?" Ajmad Qurashi reported that Guru Nanak stayed in Baghdad for about 12 years [26].

The above suggestions of either a six year or a 12 year stay in Baghdad support the findings of Chahal and Dhaliwal [27] that Guru Nanak could have stayed in Middle East for at least 11 years. This is his longest period of travel in the Middle East (Islamic countries). But very little is apparent about this area and Islam in any of his writings except the Babar bani [24]. Even the so-called *Mekke Ki Gosht* written by Guru Nanak is not available now. However, some of the writings of Rukn-ud-din and some of the so-called writings of Guru Nanak as reported by Dr Trilochan Singh [7] are worth analyzing to find out more about Guru Nanak's mission in Middle East.

After Baghdad, Guru Nanak returned to India through Kabul. He reached Eminabad, close to Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan) during 1521 when this town was ruined and Babur killed many innocent people. Dowe [5] [28] [29]writes that Guru Nanak was an eye witness to this destruction.

Dawe [5] reported in *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism* that it is difficult to establish an exact itinerary of Guru Nanak's travel. Chahal and Dhaliwal [27] have also found that there was a lot of confusion about the travels of Guru Nanak in the Middle East as reported by Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [17], and Trilochan Singh [7].

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The Sikh Gurus

Chahal [30] and Baldev Singh [31] in their research articles have outlined that Nanak was declared as Guru first by Guru Angad and then by Guru Amardas, and Guru Ramdas in their Bani. Finally, Guru Arjan confirmed in his Bani that Nanak is the Guru:

1. Guru Angad

ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਕਿਆ ਉਪਦੇਸੀਐ[1] ਜਿਨ[2] ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਉ[3] ॥੧॥

Ŧin ka▫o ki▫ā upḏesī▫ai jin gur Nānak ḏe▫o. ||1||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 2, ਪੰਨਾ 1.

What teachings can be imparted[1] to those[2] who have the Guru Nanak as their enlightened teacher[3]?

AGGS, M 2, p 150

2. Guru Amardas

The next Guru, Amar Das, also says that Nanak is the Guru:

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਕਉ ਸਤਿ[1] ਗੁਰੁ[2] ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਿਨ੍ਹ ਕਾ ਲੇਖਾ[3] ਨਿਬੜਿਆ[4] ॥

Nānak jinĥ ka▫o sat̪gur mili▫ā ṯinĥ kā lekẖā nibṛi▫ā. ||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 3, ਪੰਨਾ 435.

Those, to whom Nanak, the true[1] Guru[2], has imparted his philosophy, their deeds[3] have been accounted[4] for."

AGGS, M 3, p 435.

3. Guru Ramdas

Thereafter, Guru Ram Das, also says the same thing:

ਧਨੁ ਧੰਨੁ[1] ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਮਦਰਸੀ[2] ਜਿਨਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ[3] ਉਸਤਤਿ[4] ਤਰੀ ਤਰਾਂਤਿ ॥

Ḏẖan ḏẖan gurū Nānak samaḏrasī jin ninḏā us̱t̪a̱t̪ ṯarī ṯarā'nt̪. |

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 1264.

Praise worthy[1] is Guru Nanak, who treats everybody equally [2] and has overcome[5] the character of slandering[3] and praising[4] others (for selfish purposes) and helps others to overcome[6] this nature. 4.5.

AGGS, M 4, p 1264.

And

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ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ[1] ਗੁਰੂ[2] ਹੈ ਪੂਰਾ[3] ਮਿਲਿ[4] ਸਤਿਗੁਰ[5] ਨਾਮੁ[6] ਧਿਆਇਆ[7] ॥

Nānak gurū gurū hai pūrā mil satgur nām ḏẖi▫ā▫i▫ā.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੪, ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮੨.

Nanak is the Guru1 of Gurus2, is the complete3 and true Guru5 by understanding[4] him one can realize/comprehend7 God6.*

AGGS, M 4, p 882.

* ਗੁਰੂ[1] ਗੁਰੂ[2] *'Guru Guru'* means 'Guru of the Gurus' according to Bhai Kahn Singh [32].

4. Guru Arjan

The most important phrase of the fifth Guru, Arjan, is quoted here, which clearly confirms that Nanak is the Guru*:*

ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਨ ਸੁਣਿਆ[1] ਪੇਖਿਆ[2] ਸੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਰਭਾਸਿ[3] ਨ ਪਰਿਆ ਰੇ ॥

Gur Nānak jin suṇi▫ā pekẖi▫ā se fir garbẖās na pari▫ā re.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੬੧੨.

Those, who have heard[1] and analyzed[2] the philosophy of Guru Nanak, do not fall into ignorance[3] again.

AGGS, M 5, p 612.

Bhai Kahn Singh's Mahan Kosh:

ਪੇਖਨਾ: ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ, ਨਿਹਾਰਨਾ, "ਪੇਖਿਓ ਲਾਲਨ ਪਾਟ ਬੀਚਿ ਖੋਏ". ਵਿਚਾਰਣਾ, ਸੋਚਣਾ, "ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੈ ਸਰਬ ਢੰਢੋਲਿ" (ਸੁਖਮਨੀ), ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ, ਖਲ "ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ" ਮ: ੯, ਨਜਾਰਾ, ਦਿਰਸ਼ਯ । (*Pekhna*: Means to evaluate, show, game, scene)

ਪੇਖਿ: ਦੇਖਕੇ, ਪੇਰਕਣ ਕਰਕੇ, "ਪੈਖਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਗਸੇ" । (*Pekh*: To evaluate. To see)

Therefore, ਪੇਖਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਪੇਖਿ / ਪੇਖਿਆ (*Pekhana jan pekh/pekhia*) whether '*Khakha*' is with or without *siari (accent on letter as ਖਿ)* it means "to see' as well as ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ (*prerana*) to evaluate and ਸੋਚਣਾ (*sochana*) to think. In the above phrase, ਪੇਖਿਆ (*pekhia*) means **'**evaluated**',** **'**understood'. And ਗਰਭਾਸਿ (*garbas*) has been used metaphorically as **'**ignoranc**e'** since when the developing embryo is in the womb; it is ignorant about the outside world. Its only link is with the mother who supplies all the nutrition through her blood for its growth.

Guru Arjan further strengthened the above statement as follows:

ਸਭ[1] ਤੇ ਵਡਾ[2] ਸਤਿ[3] ਗੁਰੁ[4] ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਲ[5] ਰਾਖੀ ਮੇਰੀ ॥

Sabẖ ṯe vadā satgur Nānak jin kal rākẖī merī. ||

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AGGS, M 5, p 750.

Dr Gopal Singh [33], Dr Talib [34], Prof Sahib Singh [35] and many others have interpreted it as follows:
Guru Nanak is greatest of all who has protected my honor.

But if we look in to the SGGS Gurmukhi-Gurmukhi Dictionary [15] which defines "ਕਲ" as ਸ਼ਕਤੀ (*shakti*), ਸਮਰਥਾ (*samartha*), ਤਾਕਤ (*takat*), ਸੱਤਿਆ (*satya*), ਧਰਮ-ਸਤਾ (*dharma satta*) (Energy, capability, power, truth, religious status). If we take the meaning of "ਕਲ" (*kal*) as "capability" then its interpretation would be quite different than that of the above translations:
The true[3] Guru[4] Nanak is the greatest[2] of all[1] the Gurus who has made me capable[5] to understand God.

But some theologians consider that *Sat Guru* is God and interpret that phrase as follows:
Nanak says. "The God is greatest of all who has protected my honor."

However, Guru Arjan explains in the following phrase that Nanak is also **Sat Guru**:
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿ[1] ਗੁਰਿ[2] ਭੇਟਿਐ[3] ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ[4] ॥
ਹਸੰਦਿਆ[5] ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ[6] ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ[7] ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ[8] ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ[9] ॥੨॥
Nānak sat̲gur bẖeti▫ai pūrī hovai jugat̲.
Hasan̲di▫ā kẖelan̲di▫ā painan̲di▫ā kẖāvan̲di▫ā vicẖe hovai mukat̲. ||2||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 522.
Guru Arjan advises that:
Those, who have accepted[3] Nanak as their true[1] Guru[2] (true enlightener), find the perfect way of life[4].
That is:
One can get salvation[9] by following the philosophy of Guru Nanak while laughing[5] (being happy), playing[6] (right games), dressing[7] (proper dress - but not deceptive one) and eating[8] (properly).
AGGS, M 5, p 522.

The following verse of Guru Arjan explains that he is asking Nanak to impart his wisdom/knowledge (philosophy) onto him:
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਜਾਲੇ ॥੧॥
Nānak sikẖ an̲e▫e man parīt̲am sāan̲gsang bẖaram jāle. ||1||
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਝੂਠ ਪਸਾਰੇ ॥੨॥
Nānak sikẖ an̲e▫e man parīt̲am bin har jẖūt̲h pasāre. ||2||

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ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਹਰਿ ਲਦੇ ਖੇਪ ਸਵਲੀ ॥੩॥

Nānak sikẖ ḏe▫e man parīṯam har laḏe kẖep savlī. ||3||

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਤਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੋ ॥੪॥

Nānak sikẖ ḏe▫e man parīṯam kar sanṯā sang nivāso. ||4||

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਖ[1] ਸੰਤ[2] ਸਮਝਾਈ[3] ਹਰਿ[4] ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ[5] ਮਨੁ[6] ਲੀਨਾ[7] ॥੫॥੧॥੨॥

Nānak sikẖ sanṯ samjẖā▫ī har parem bẖagaṯ man līnā. ||5||1||2||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 79-80. (AGGS, M 5, p 79-80.)

The part, "ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ" (Nānak sikẖ ḏe▫e man parīṯam), is common in all the four phrases.

Prof Sahib Singh [35] interpreted, ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ (Nānak sikẖ ḏe▫e), as ਨਾਨਕ (ਤੇਨੂੰ) ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ (Nanak advises you).

Giani Harbans Singh [36] also interpreted, ਸਖਿ ਦੇਇ, as ਨਾਨਕ (ਤੇਨੂੰ) ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ (Nanak advises you).

The above part is followed by "ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ" (man parīṯam), means "my dear mind".

Therefore, the logical interpretation is:

Guru Arjan requests:

Oh my dear mind! Guru Nanak imparts his advice/wisdom to you that:

1. *The company of noble people will eliminate superstitions/doubts.*
2. *Except the God all others (gods, goddesses) are falsehood (perishable expansion).*
3. *Gather only the beneficial/profitable business of understanding God.*
4. *Live in the company of noble people.*

Thereafter Guru Arjan says:

The teachings[1] of Sant[2] (Guru Nanak) makes us understand[3] how to devote[5] our minds[6] toward[7] the love for God[4].

AGGS, M 5, p 79-80.

Note: Nanak (ਨਾਨਕੁ) in first four phrases in which '*Kaka*' is with '*onkar*' (ਕੁ) that means here Nanak himself is writing. In the fifth phrase '*Kaka*' is without '*onkar*' (ਕ) in Nanak (ਨਾਨਕ) that means the pen name of Guru Arjan. However, this rule is not applicable everywhere since at some place Nanak (ਨਾਨਕ) without '*onkar*' on '*Kaka*' also means Nanak himself.

Swayiay of Guru Arjan explains that Nanak is the Guru and his bani (Word) is a lamp of wisdom (enlightener) for the whole humanity:

ਬਲਿਓ ਚਰਾਗੁ[1] ਅੰਧਜਜਾਰ[2] ਮਹਿ ਸਭ ਕਲਿ[3] ਉਧਰੀ[4] ਇਕ ਨਾਮ[5] ਧਰਮ[6] ॥

Bali▫o cẖarāg anḏẖ▫yār meh sabẖ kal uḏẖrī ik nām ḏẖaram.

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ਪ੍ਰਗਟੁ[7] ਸਗਲ[8] ਹਰਿ ਭਵਨ[9] ਮਹਿ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ[10] ॥੯॥

Pargat sagal har bẖavan mėh jan Nānak gur pārbarahm. ||9|

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1387.

Note: ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਧਰਮ (*nām ḏẖaram)* = ਧਰਮ *(Dharam)* is usually interpreted as 'Religion' but it also means 'duty'/ 'righteousness'. According to Guru Nanak, ਨਾਮ used here means 'righteousness'. Therefore, here ਇਕ ਨਾਮ ਧਰਮ has been interpreted as 'the religion of righteousness.

Nanak, the Guru, and an image of Infinite God[10], has appeared[7] in the whole8 world[9] as a light[1] to dispel[4] darkness (ignorance)[2] from the whole world[3] under one religion[6] of righteousness[5].

AGGS, M 5, p 1387.

Bhatt

1. Satta Doom

Besides the Sikh Gurus, Satta Doom, who was a *kirtania* (hymn singer) in the *darbar* (court) of Guru Arjan, declared that Guru Nanak has promulgated a new philosophy and challenged many wrong religious beliefs, which has been symbolized as 'changing the course of Ganges' in his following verse in the AGGS:

ਹੋਰਿੰਉ[1] ਗੰਗ[2] ਵਹਾਈਐ[3] ਦੁਨਿਆਈ[4] ਆਖੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਉਨੁ[5]॥

Hori▫n▫o gang vahā▫ī▫ai ḏuni▫ā▫ī ākẖai kė ki▫on.

ਨਾਨਕ ਈਸਰਿ[6] ਜਗਨਾਥਿ[7] ਉਚਹਦੀ[8] ਵੈਣੁ ਵਿਰਿਕਿਉਨੁ ॥

Nānak īsar jagnāth uchẖaḏī vaiṇ viriki▫on.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਸੱਤਾ ਡੂਮ, ਪੰਨਾ 967.

The people[4] of the world say what a strange[5] philosophy of the highest order[8] has been promulgated[3] by Nanak, the controller of the world[6,7], which is like changing[1] the course[3] of Ganges[2].

AGGS, Satta Doom, p 967.

ਹੋਰਿੰਉ ਗੰਗ (*Hori▫n▫o gang*) = 'Changed the course of Ganges' is an allegoric expression for entirely changing the traditional eastern philosophy into a new philosophy of highest order. Satta Doom has also addressed Guru Nanak metaphorically as ਜਗਨਾਥਿ (the Controller of World) in his praise. The above verses clearly indicate that Nanak has realized a new philosophy and he is accepted as the Guru by the Sikh Gurus and Satta Doom.

The above argument indicates that Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the 'House of

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Nanak' and a Bhatt, Satta Doom, have accepted Nanak as the GURU.

Sikh Literature

Sikh literature other than the AGGS also supports that Gurbani is that bani, which was uttered by Guru Nanak and by his successors to the 'House of Nanak':

1. Bhai Kahn Singh

Bhai Kahn Singh [37] defines bani as follows:
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾ-ਨਸ਼ਿਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਖ ਤੋਂ ਅਕਾਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਈ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ' ਸੰਗਯਾ ਹੈ ।
"The bani (word), which has been revealed through the mouth of Satguru Nanak and the successor Satgurus under the inspiration of the Akal (the God), is called ***Gurbani****."*

The above definition of 'Gurbani' is based on the above discussion. Nevertheless, Bhai Gurdas has diluted this term and defined 'Gurbani' is a bani which has been revealed by any spiritually enlightened man is called *Gurbani*. However, Bhai Kahn Singh insists that the word *'Gurbani'* is especially used for the '*bani* 'of our Satgurus [a note in Ref. #[37]].

Bhai Kahn Singh [37] had also emphasized that Nanak was established as the Guru of the humanity as is indicated in his definition of Guru:
"ਅਗਯਾਨ ਵਿਨਾਸ਼ਕ, ਸਤੋਯ ਤੇ ਹਿਤ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਟਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੂਢੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਮਾਤ੍ਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਧਾਰ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਥਾਪੇ ਹਨ ।"
"Guru is the name for the truth that dispels ignorance, but this word (Guru) has a special power in Guru Nanak who has been established as the Guru for humanity by the God."

2. Gurbilas Patshahi 6

Although there is a lot of misinformation about *Sikhi* (Sikhism) in *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* (anonymous) but if, grain can be separated from chaff, and then it is possible to glean some very important information buried in *Gurbilas Patshahi 6.* Guru Hargobind had imbibed the teaching of Guru Nanak, which provided immense spiritual pleasure/bliss to him. He further advised Guru Har Rai to imbibe the teachings of Guru Nanak [38]:
ਜੋ ਸਿਖਯਾ[1] ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੇਰੀ । ਸੋ ਦੀਨੀ ਸੁਖਸਿੰਧੁ[2] ਘਨੇਰੀ[3] ।...
ਏ ਬਿਧਿ[4] ਸਿਖਯਾ[5] ਦਈ ਅਪਾਰ[6] । ਗੁਰ ਹਿਰ ਰਾਇ[7] ਹੀਏ ਸਭ ਧਾਰ[8] ।
ਅਦਿਆਇ 21, ਪੰਨਾ 796 (Adayai 21, p 796) ([38], p 99)

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Note: ਬਿਧਿ (*Bidh*) = A gift of mixed dry fruits and sweets exchanged between bride's and groom's parents. Here it has been interpreted simply as 'gift'.

That teaching1, which was imparted by Guru Nanak, gives lots3 of spiritual pleasure/bliss2...
Guru Har Rai was advised to imbibe8 this gift4 of the teaching5, which is boundless6 (in wisdom), in his (Har Rai) heart7.
Then at the time of his demise, Guru Hargobind again advised the Sikhs to serve the Sikhs and accept the guidance of Guru Nanak:

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੀਯੋ । ਏਕ ਟੇਕ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਧਰੀਯੋ ।

Gursikhan ki seva kario. Aek taek gur Nanak dhario.

ਅਦਿਆਇ 21, ਪੰਨਾ 796 (Adayai 21, p 796) [[38], p 99]

Serve the Sikhs of the Guru (Nanak). Accept the guidance of Guru Nanak.

It is also evident from the above discussion that some Sikh literature other than the AGGS also support that Nanak is the Guru who promulgated the bani (Word). And the Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the 'House of Nanak' accepted, practiced and preached it.

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CONTINUITY OF MISSION OF GURU NANAK

Bhai Lehna was a *Pujari* (devotee*)* of the goddess Durga at his village Khadur, near Amritsar and used to take pilgrims to Devi at Jvalamukhi in the hills (in Himachal) every year. He became a disciple of Guru Nanak in his late twenties. Guru Nanak bestowed the name of Angad on him to signify that the disciple had become as much part of him as his own limb (*ang*) since he whole heartedly served him. The *Janam Sakhis* (life stories of Guru Nanak) and *Mehma Prakash* (enlightening praises) lay insistent stress on the patient, unquestioning loyalty of Angad, the disciple, distinguished him in this respect not merely from Guru Nanak's sons but also from other reputable disciples whose endurance proved to have limits [39].

Almost all the Sikh historians including Mcleod [39] agree on one point that Guru Nanak bestowed Guru-ship onto Angad by-passing his sons on Har *vedi* (days of the waning of the Moon) 13, 1596 Bikrami / June *13*, 1539. Mcleod says that although there is no truth in these anecdotes found in *Janam Sakhis*, the decision was made by Guru Nanak on the supreme loyalty and obedience of Angad. Karam Singh [6], a Sikh historian, has reported that all such anecdotes in *Janam Sakhi* by Bhai Bala are unscientific and illogical. On the other hand, one does not find any anecdote to show any evidence if Guru Nanak ever tried to test the intellect of Angad about his understanding philosophy of Guru Nanak.

Immediately after the passing away of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad shifted to his village Khadur for the preaching of the philosophy of Guru Nanak. This School of Nanakian Philosophy was continued by the five Sikh Gurus until further bestowing of Guruship on any living person was discontinued by the last (tenth) Guru, Gobind Singh. He bestowed Guru-ship onto the 'Aad Granth' in 1708, to which the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur was also added in around 1705, as accepted by the majority of the Sikh historians, theologians and the Sikh preachers. The above 'School of Nanakian Philosophy' accepts 'Nanak as the Guru' as discussed earlier.

On the other hand, Sikh history also tells us that Baba Sri Chand (1494-1629), the elder son of Guru Nanak, continued to preach the teachings (philosophy) of Guru Nanak at Kartarpur. When this place was swept away by the flood in river Ravi, Baba Sri Chand started the same institution at a new place across the Ravi, a place safe from floods. This institution of preaching was named after Nanak as 'Dehra Baba Nanak' (The House of Baba Nanak). This school of Baba Sri Chand is called as *Udasi*. The *Matra* (may be 'Mantra'), the sacred incantation or composition, attributed to the Udasi Saint, Balu Hansa, records that Baba Sri Chand received enlightenment from Nanak, the perfect Guru, and after the passing away of the latter he started his own sect [40]. Balu Hansa was one of four preachers (Almast, Phul, Gobind/Gonda, and Balu Hansa) appointed by Baba Gurditta, son of Guru Hargobind [40]. Therefore, it is hard to understand why his sect is called *Udasi* when Baba Sri Chand was enlightened by the perfect Guru, Nanak,

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his own father. Some Sikh Gurus also supported this school [40]. It appears as if two parallel schools of Nanakian Philosophy continued – One by Guru Anagd at Khadur Sahib and the other by Baba Sri Chand at Kartarpur, which was later shifted to Dehra Baba Nanak.

Later on it is said that a lot of Vedantic philosophy was amalgamated in the teachings of Guru Nanak by the school of Baba Sri Chand. The 'school' run by Guru Angad is considered by majority of the Sikh theologians and scholars to be the right 'School of Nanakian Philosophy', which was continued by next 8 Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh was the last in this series of ten Gurus.

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IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK ORIGINAL AND UNIQUE?

Bouquet [41] writes that "Sikhism is the fruit of the hybridization between Islam and Hinduism." McLeod [42] says that it is the usual interpretation of the religion of Guru Nanak and his successors, and among Western writers it would appear to be an universal assumption. According to this interpretation Sikhism is properly regarded as a blend of Hindu beliefs and Islam by quoting Noss's statement [43] - 'an outstanding example of conscious religious syncretism', a noble attempt to fuse in single system elements drawn from two separate and largely disparate religions. McLeod further quotes Khushwant Singh [44] who evidently expresses the same interpretation: "*Sikhism was born out of wedlock between Hinduism and Islam*."

McLeod continues to strengthen his assumption slightly differently than that said so far:
"*Sikhism cannot be located wholly within the area of Hindu tradition, it cannot be regarded as sect of Islam, and we can hardly accept the claim that it was delivered by direct, unmediated inspiration from on high.*" [42].

After discussing Sikhism as hybridization of Hinduism and Islam McLeod [42] takes it towards the Sant tradition:
"In contrast to this 'mixture' theory, we can postulate an 'admixture' theory, and it is this second interpretation which is advanced in this paper. It affirms a basically Hindu origin and holds that Muslim influence, although certainly evident, is nowhere of fundamental significance in the thought of Guru Nanak. The religion of Guru Nanak, and so of Sikhism as a whole, is firmly imbedded in the Sant Tradition of Northern India, in the beliefs of the so-called Nirguna Sampradaya."

It is just possible that the above observations about placing Guru Nanak in the 'Sant Tradition' might be based on the writings of some scholars, especially Prof Sahib Singh, who is of this view in his interpretation of the bhagt bani. He emphatically proves that bani of the Bhagats of Sant Tradition is exactly in conformity of the Bani of Guru Nanak ([35] Vol. 10). If it is true then this finding leads to a new question: Is the bani of Guru Nanak based on the bhagat bani since some bhagats and Sufis had written their bani before Guru Nanak?

The above assertions of McLeod are based on his biased opinion and on the misinterpretations of the bani of Guru Nanak by some Sikh scholars under the influence of Vedantic philosophy. However, McLeod has failed to look into other historical information, especially, reported by Dr Trilochan Singh ([7], p-383) about Guru Nanak's stay in Baghdad according to *Makke di Gosht:*
"He was able to establish that his religion was something quite distinct and different

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from the popular orthodox Hinduism."

Similarly, Macauliffe described Guru Nanak as follows:
"*Guru Nanak was not a priest either by birth or education, but a man who soared to the loftiest heights of divine emotionalism, and exalted his mental vision to an ethical ideal beyond the conception of Hindu or Muhammadan*."[45]

Moreover, he continued to describe Guru Nanak's contributions as:
"*Now there is here presented a religion totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influence. Based on the concept of unity of God, it rejected Hindu formularies and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual, and standards which were totally opposed to the theological beliefs of Guru Nanak's age and country*." ([45]p- Liv).

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SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY

It is important to understand the terms *Sikh* and *Sikhi* before we discuss some basic principles of Guru Nanak's Philosophy:

Sikh – The Follower

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨੀਰੁ[1] ਗਿਆਨਿ[2] ਮਨ ਮਜਨੁ[3] ਅਠਸਠਿ[4] ਤੀਰਥ[5] ਸੰਗਿ ਗਹੇ ॥

Amriṯ nīr gi▫ān man majan aṯhsaṯh ṯirath sang gahe.
One who bathes[3] (studies) in the knowledge[2], which helps to live successful life[1], is equivalent to bathing in the so-called 68[4] sarovars (ponds), sacred places[5].

ਗੁਰ[6] ਉਪਦੇਸਿ[7] ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਕ[8] ਸੇਵੇ[9] ਸਿਖੁ[10] ਸੋ ਖੋਜਿ[11] ਲਹੈ ॥੧॥

Gur upḏes javāhar māṇak seve sikẖ so kẖoj lahai. ||1||
The above teachings[7] of the Guru[6] (or enlightening teachings) are like valuable stones;[8] the one, who can discover[11] this and follow/practice[9] it, is a Sikh[10].
AGGS, M 1, p 1328.
(It means the follower of teachings of the guru is a Sikh.)

Sikh – Advice

On the other hand, 'Sikh' also means 'advice':

ਜੇਤੀ ਸਿਰਠਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਵੇਖਾ ਵਿਣੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਲਈ ॥

Jeṯī siraṯh upā▫ī vekẖā viṇ karmā kė milai la▫ī.

ਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ ॥

Maṯ vicẖ raṯan javāhar māṇik je ik gur kī sikẖ suṇī.
ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ # 6, ਪੰਨਾ 2.
If one could listen (understand) even once to the advice of the Guru; one's wisdom is enhanced (full of valuables stones) since it has been seen that no living being in this world can obtain anything without good hard work.
AGGS, Jap # 6, p 2.

Sikhi
'Sikhi' means teachings:

ਸਿਖੀ[1] ਸਿਖਿਆ[2] ਗੁਰ[3] ਵੀਚਾਰਿ[4] ॥

Sikẖī sikẖi▫ā gur vīcẖār.

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ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 456.

Sikhi[1] is that teaching[2] which is based on the philosophy**[4] of the Guru[3].*
AGGS, M 1, p 465.
*Teachings: something that is taught, e.g. a point of doctrine.
**Philosophy: the branch of knowledge or academic study devoted to the systematic examination of basic concepts such as truth, existence, reality, causality, and freedom; a particular system of thought or doctrine.

The Principles

There are some basic principles of the philosophy of Guru Nanak on which the foundation of 'Sikhi' (Sikhism) is based. Even though throughout the Gurbani it is vehemently emphasized that the basic principles are for comprehension, realization and internalization, still the current methods and modes of the mentors of Sikhi do not practice and promote these principles. So much so that none of these phrases of bani of Guru Nanak are included in the book, *Sabd Kirtan*, by Dr Santokh Singh [46]. It appears that intentionally or unintentionally the Sikhs are being kept ignorant about the basic principles of philosophy of Guru Nanak. Some of these Basic Principles are discussed as follows:

1. ਵੀਚਾਰੁ (Vichaar)- Philosophy

Guru Nanak is advising the Pundit to discover the philosophy in the sacred books rather than just reciting to their followers.

ਪੰਡਿਤ[1] ਵਾਚਹਿ[2] ਪੋਥੀਆ[3] ਨਾ ਬੂਝਹਿ[4] ਵੀਚਾਰੁ[5] ॥

Pandiṯ vācẖėh pothī▫ā nā būjẖėh vīcẖār.

ਅਨ[6] ਕਉ ਮਤੀ[7] ਦੇ ਚਲਹਿ[8] ਮਾਇਆ[9] ਕਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ[10] ॥

An ka▫o maṯī ḏe cẖalėh mā▫i▫ā kā vāpār.

ਕਥਨੀ[11] ਬ੍ਰੂਠੀ[12] ਜਗੁ[13] ਭਵੈ[14] ਰਹਣੀ[15] ਸਬਦੁ[16] ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥੬॥

Kathnī jẖūṯẖī jag bẖavai rahṇī sabaḏ so sār. ||6||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 56.

During the time of Guru Nanak:
The Pundits[1] recite/read[2] the sacred books[3] for the people but never tried to discover[4] and explain the philosophy[5] in them.
Advising[7] others[6] for money[9] is nothing more than conducting[8] business[10] for personal gain.
The whole world (population)[13] is wondering[14] about the discussion[11] of falsehood[12] but do not try to live[15] according to the (sabd) philosophy[16].

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AGGS, M 1, p 56.

ਸਬਦੁ[16]: Sabd here means philosophy which has been explained by Guru Nanak in Stanza (pauri) # 38.

Now the same job of Pandits has been taken up by *granthis* and the Sikh mentors who recite bani from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib for the Sikh families either at their homes or at a gurdwara but don't explain to them the philosophy in the bani. They take the money for this job and go home.

Considering yogic prevalent practices time of using a begging bowel and a staff for survival in addition to the yogic philosophy; Guru Nanak recommended the following:

ਪਤੁ[1] ਵੀਚਾਰੁ[2] ਗਿਆਨ[3] ਮਤਿ[4] ਡੰਡਾ[5] ਵਰਤਮਾਨ[6] ਬਿਭੂਤੰ[7] ॥

Paṯ vīcẖār gi▫ān maṯ dandā varaṯmān bibẖūṯa'n.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 1, ਪੰਨਾ 360. AGGS, M 1, p 360.

Guru Nanak advising the Yogi that:
My begging bowl[1] is my philosophy/idea/thought[2]; and knowledge[3] and wisdom/intellect[4] is my walking cane[5] – all are presently[6] like ashes[7] smeared on my body, meaning always with me.
AGGS, M 1, p 360.

2. ਵੀਚਾਰੁ (Vichaar)- Deliberation/Contemplation

Guru Nanak realized during his lifetime that there would be very few of his followers who would contemplate the philosophy embodied in his bani. Indeed, that has become the factual truth. Guru Nanak wrote:

ਬਾਣੀ[1] ਬਿਰਲਉ[2] ਬੀਚਾਰਸੀ[3] ਜੇ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ[4] ਹੋਇ ॥

ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਹਾ[5] ਪੁਰਖ[7] ਕੀ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ[8] ਵਾਸਾ[9] ਹੋਇ ॥੪੦॥

Baṇī birla▫o bīcẖārsī je ko gurmukẖ ho▫e.
Ih baṇī mahā purakẖ kī nij gẖar vāsā ho▫e. ||40||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 935.

"Only the rare[2] Guru-oriented[4] deliberates/contemplates[3] on the bani (word)[1].
This bani (word) is of the pre-eminent[6] preceptor[7],
Is imbibed[9] in one's own mind[8] (only through its deliberation/internalization)."
AGGS, M 1, p 935.

The term 'Guru-oriented' (intellectual/exalted person) used in the above phrase has been defined by Guru Nanak as follows:

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ਕਥਤਾ[1] ਬਕਤਾ[2] ਸੁਨਤਾ[3] ਸੋਈ[4] ॥

ਆਪੁ[5] ਬੀਚਾਰੇ[6] ਸੁ ਗਿਆਨੀ[7] ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Kathṯā bakṯā sunṯā so▫ī.
Āp bīcẖāre so gi▫ānī ho▫ī. ||1|| rahā▫o
ਅਗਗਸ ,ਮ 1 :ਪੰਨਾ.152
The one[4], who discusses[1], teaches[2] others, hears[3] others and analyses[6] oneself[5], is the giani (intellectual/exalted person)[7].
AGGS, M 1, 152.

3. Importance of Deliberation/Discussion

Deliberation/discussion on Sabd is most important for the Sikh to understand Gurbani in its real perspective:

ਸਭਸੈ[1] ਊਪਰਿ[2] ਗੁਰ[3] ਸਬਦੁ[4] ਬੀਚਾਰੁ[5] ॥

Sabẖsai ūpar gur sabaḏ bīcẖār.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 1, ਪ 904.

The highest[1] importance[2] is given to the deliberation / discussion[5] on the sabd (philosophy)[4] of the Guru[3].

AGGS, M 1, p 904.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ[1] ਸਬਦੁ[2] ਵੀਚਾਰੁ[3] ॥

Gur kī sevā sabaḏ vīcẖār.
ਹਉਮੈ[4] ਮਾਰੇ[5] ਕਰਣੀ[6] ਸਾਰੁ[7] ॥੭॥

Ha▫umai māre karṇī sār. ||7||
ਜਪ[8] ਤਪ[9] ਸੰਜਮ[10] ਪਾਠ[11] ਪੁਰਾਣੁ[12] ॥

Jap ṯap sanjam pāṯẖ purāṇ.
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਪਰੰਪਰ[13] ਮਾਨੁ[14] ॥੮॥੬॥

Kaho Nānak aprampar mān. ||8||6||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 223.

The service [1]to the Guru is to comprehend [3]the philosophy [2]of the Guru.
What is that philosophy ?
Getting rid [5]of ego [4]and to do good [7]deeds.[6]
What is the benefit of good deeds and getting rid of ego?
Accept[14] that doing good deeds and knowing the God is above[13] all your meditation[8], austerities[9], self-control and reading[11] of the Puranas[12].

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AGGS, M 1, p 223

The service to the God is to contemplate the philosophy in the Sabd and practicing it. The main principle of the philosophy given here is that eliminating the ego and doing good deeds for the humanity is the greatest service of all.

Thereafter, Guru Nanak advises that one must use wisdom before taking any action to resolve one's problems:

4. Evaluation before Accepting

Guru Nanak advises not to have faith on any philosophy or suggestion or teachings before its proper evaluation:

ਸੁਣਿ[1] ਮੁੰਧੇ[2] ਹਰਣਾਖੀਏ[3] ਗੂੜਾ[4] ਵੈਣੁ[5] ਅਪਾਰੁ[6] ॥

ਪਹਿਲਾ[7] ਵਸਤੁ[8] ਸਿਞਾਣਿ[9] ਕੈ ਤਾਂ ਕੀਚੈ[10] ਵਾਪਾਰੁ[11] ॥

Suṇ mundẖe harṇākẖī▫e gūṛā vaiṇ apār.
Pahilā vasaṯ siñāṇ kai ṯā'n kīcẖai vāpār.
AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

Oh innocent devotee (bride)[2] with inquisitive eyes of a deer[3]!

Listen[1] to the deep[4] message of infinite[6] wisdom[5].

First[7], evaluate[9] everything[8] then buy/accept/adopt[10, 11].

5. Use of Wisdom (ਅਕਲਿ)

Continuing the above advice Guru Nanak emphasizes using wisdom to find out what is right and what is wrong:

ਅਕਲਿ[1] ਏਹ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ[2] ਅਕਲਿ[3] ਗਵਾਈਐ[4] ਬਾਦਿ[5] ॥

Akal eh na ākẖī▫ai akal gavā▫ī▫ai bāḏ.
That wisdom[3] which leads[4] to arguments[5] is not called[2] wisdom[1].

ਅਕਲੀ[6] ਸਾਹਿਬੁ[7] ਸੇਵੀਐ[8] ਅਕਲੀ[9] ਪਾਈਐ ਮਾਨੁ[10] ॥

Aklī sāhib sevī▫ai aklī pā▫ī▫ai mān.
One can understand[8] God[7] only by using the intellect[6]; and by using the intellect[9] one attains honor[10].

ਅਕਲੀ[11] ਪੜ੍ਹਿ[12] ਕੈ ਬੁਝੀਐ[13] ਅਕਲੀ[14] ਕੀਚੈ ਦਾਨੁ[15] ॥

Aklī paṛĥ kai bujẖī▫ai aklī kīcẖai ḏān.
With the intellect[11], one should read[12] to discover[13] the truth.
In addition, one should use the intellect[14] to evaluate the cause before donating charity[15] for that cause.

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ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੈ[16] ਰਾਹੁ[17] ਏਹੁ ਹੋਰਿ[18] ਗਲਾਂ[19] ਸੈਤਾਨੁ[20] ॥੧॥

Nānak ākẖai rāhu ehu hor galā'n saiṯān. ||1||

Nanak Says16:

This is the real path[17]; all other[18] preachings (talks)[19] lead to devilish actions[20]."

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1245. (AGGS, M 1, p 1245).

6. Equality

Contrary to the prevailing inequality because of caste, creed and color classifications, Guru Nanak promulgated Equality:

ਸਭੁ[1] ਕੋ ਊਚਾ[2] ਆਖੀਐ[3] ਨੀਚੁ[4] ਨ ਦੀਸੈ5 ਕੋਇ[6] ॥

Sabẖ ko ūcẖā ākẖī▫ai nīcẖ na ḏīsai ko▫e.

ਇਕਨੈ[7] ਭਾਂਡੈ[8] ਸਾਜਿਐ[9] ਇਕੁ[10] ਚਾਨਣੁ[11] ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ[12] ॥

Iknai bẖā'nde sāji▫ai ik cẖānaṇ ṯihu lo▫e.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਫੰਨਾ 62.

Call[3] everyone[1] high[2], none appears[5] to be low[4];
Everyone[7] has been moulded[9] from the same matter[8];
And the same[10] source of energy[11] is found[12] in all.

AGGS, M1, p 62

7. Freedom of Expression

There is complete freedom of expression in the philosophy of Guru Nanak:

ਜਬ[1] ਲਗੁ[2] ਦੁਨੀਆ[3] ਰਹੀਐ[4] ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛੁ[5] ਸੁਣੀਐ[6] ਕਿਛੁ[7] ਕਹੀਐ[8] ॥

Jab lag ḏunī▫ā rahī▫ai Nānak kicẖẖ suṇī▫ai kicẖẖ kahī▫ai.

ਅਗਗਸ,ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 661.

"As long as[1,2] one lives[4] in this world[3] one must listen[6] to others[5] and allow others to express[8] their views[7] (to find the truth and live amicably)."

AGGS, M 1, p 661.

8. Importance of Research:

Guru Nanak's philosophy encourages conducting research to understand Gurbani in its real perspective. Guru Nanak says that those who conduct research progress:

ਖੋਜੀ[1] ਉਪਜੈ[2] ਬਾਦੀ[3] ਬਿਨਸੈ[4] ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ[5] ਗੁਰ[6] ਕਰਤਾਰਾ[7] ॥

Kẖojī upjai bāḏī binsai ha▫o bal bal gur karṯārā.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1255.

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"The researcher[1] progresses[2] while the other (discursive and aimless)[3] perishes[4]; (Nanak) sacrifices[5] himself to the Guru[6], the Creator[7]."
AGGS, M 1, p 1255.

9. Altruism

Guru teaches that that education is good which can be applied for the welfare of the humanity:

ਵਿਦਿਆ[1] ਵੀਚਾਰੀ[2] ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ[3] ॥

viḏi▫ā vīcẖārī ṯā'n par▫upkārī.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 356.

Nanak Says:
That education[1] is worthwhile, which is applied[2] to the welfare of humanity[3].
AGGS, M 1, p 356.

Similalry, that service is good which is applicable to the welfare of the huanity:

ਵਿਚਿ[1] ਦੁਨੀਆ[2] ਸੇਵ[3] ਕਮਾਈਐ[4] ॥

ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ*[5] ਬੈਸਣੁ[6] ਪਾਈਐ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਹ[7] ਲੁਡਾਈਐ[8] ॥੪॥੩੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ.26

Vicẖ ḏunī▫ā sev kamā▫ī▫ai.
Ŧā ḏargėh baisaṇ pā▫ī▫ai.
Kaho Nānak bāh ludā▫ī▫ai. ||4||33||
While living[1] in this world[2] the one, who serves[3] humanity, attains peace of mind[4].
Nanak says that one waves[8] his arms[7] in happiness (this is a great honor)[5,6].
AGGS, M 1, p 26.

* ਦਰਗਹ: It is usually translated as 'Court of God'. Since there is no such court of God according to Nanakian Philosophy, therefore, it is metaphoric expression of 'great honor or Peace of Mind'.

ਜੇਤੇ[1] ਜੀਅ[2] ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ[3] ਵਿਣੁ[4] ਸੇਵਾ[5] ਫਲੁ[6] ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਦੁਖੁ[7] ਸੁਖੁ[8] ਭਾਣਾ[9] ਤੇਰਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ[10] ਜੀਉ[11] ਰਹੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥੪॥

Jeṯe jī▫a ṯeṯe sabẖ ṯere viṇ sevā fal kisai nāhī.
Ḏukẖ sukẖ bẖāṇā ṯerā hovai viṇ nāvai jī▫o rahai nāhī. ||4||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 354.

All [1] the living beings[2] (on this earth) are Yours[3] (means equal);
Without[4] service[5] to them (humanity), no one obtains any reward[6].

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Guru Nanak says:
All the problems[7] and pleasures[8] in life are happening[9] under the Laws of Nature[10].
If we don't follow these laws then it becomes difficult for us to live (peacefully)[11].
AGGS, M 1, p 354.

Note: ਨਾਵੈ (*nāvai)* here means emulating and living by the 'Laws of Nature'.

10. Sharing of Material Wealth

Sharing of earning for the uplift of the humanity:
ਘਾਲਿ[1] ਖਾਇ[2] ਕਿਛੁ[3] ਹਥਹੁ[4] ਦੇਇ ॥
Gẖāl kẖāᵊe kicẖẖ hathahu ḏeᵊe.
ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ[5] ਪਛਾਣਹਿ[6] ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥
Nānak rāhu pacẖẖāṇėh seᵊe. ||1||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪ 1245.
"Nanak Says:
The one, who earns by the sweat of his brow[1] and shares[2] some[3] of his earning for the welfare of the humanity, Nanak says that one has recognized[6] the real path[5] of life.
AGGS, M 1, p 1245.

It is not only sharing of the earnings but sharing of the philosophy / knowledge / wisdom with that of others and accepting the best ones and discarding the worst ones as explained in the following stanza in item # 11:

11. Sharing of Intellectual Wealth (Multiculturalism)

Guru Nanak recommends the sharing of the wealth (earnings) for the welfare of humanity as discussed earlier and a novel system of sharing intellectual wealth (wisdom) with other communities. This system may be equated to the multiculturalism adopted in Canada. Most of the peoples take the multiculturalism in a very narrowly as taking part in folk dances, social functions, religious holidays, etc. of other communities. Guru Nanak emphasized that one should not only share the material or cultural values of other communities, but if one possesses particular qualities and virtues, share these freely and discard their demerits/evils while adopting virtues:

ਗੁਣਾ[1] ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ[2] ਵਾਸੁਲਾ[3] ਕਢਿ[4] ਵਾਸੁ[5] ਲਈਜੈ ॥
Guṇā kā hovai vāsulā kaḏẖ vās laᵊījai.
ਜੇ[6] ਗੁਣ[7] ਹੋਵਨ੍ਹਿ ਸਾਜਨਾ[8] ਮਿਲਿ[9] ਸਾਝ[10] ਕਰੀਜੈ11 ॥
Je guṇ hovniṅ sājnā mil sājẖ karījai.

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ਸਾਝ[12] ਕਰੀਜੈ[13] ਗੁਣਹ[14] ਕੇਰੀ ਛੋਡਿ[15] ਅਵਗਣ[16] ਚਲੀਐ ॥

Sājẖ karījai guṇah kerī cẖẖod avgaṇ cẖalī▫ai.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 765.

If you posses[2] (a bag of)[2] wisdom/philosophy[1], open[4] it to be shared[5] with others.
If[6] your friends[8] have good principles/philosophy[7] share[10, 11] them together[9].
Only share[12,13] good principles/philosophy[14] and reject[15] the others, which are not good[16].

AGGS, M 1, p 765.

12. Praise of Woman

Guru Nanak has highest praise for women and has indicated her importance in raising the future humanity in the following verses:

ਭੰਡਿ[1] ਜੰਮੀਐ[2] ਭੰਡਿ[3] ਨਿੰਮੀਐ[4] ਭੰਡਿ[5] ਮੰਗਣੁ[6] ਵੀਆਹੁ[7] ॥

Bẖand jammī▫ai bẖand nimmī▫ai bẖand mangaṇ vī▫āhu. .

ਭੰਡਹੁ[8] ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ[9] ਭੰਡਹੁ[10] ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ[11] ॥

Bẖandahu hovai ḏosṯī bẖandahu cẖalai rāhu.

ਭੰਡੁ[12] ਮੁਆ[13] ਭੰਡੁ[14] ਭਾਲੀਐ[15] ਭੰਡਿ[16] ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ[17] ॥

Bẖand mu▫ā bẖand bẖālī▫ai bẖand hovai banḏẖān.

ਸੋ[18] ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ[19] ਆਖੀਐ[20] ਜਿਤੁ[21] ਜੰਮਹਿ[22] ਰਾਜਾਨ[23] ॥

So ki▫o manḏā ākẖī▫ai jiṯ jamėh rājān.

ਭੰਡਹੁ[24] ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ[25] ਊਪਜੈ[26] ਭੰਡੈ[27] ਬਾਝੁ[28] ਨ ਕੋਇ[29] ॥

Bẖandahu hī bẖand ūpjai bẖandai bājẖ na ko▫e.

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ[30] ਬਾਹਰਾ[31] ਏਕੋ[32] ਸਚਾ[33] ਸੋਇ ॥

Nānak bẖandai bāhrā eko sacẖā so▫e.

ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ[34] ਸਦਾ[35] ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ[36] ਭਾਗਾ[37] ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰਿ ॥

Jiṯ mukẖ saḏā salāhī▫ai bẖāgā raṯī cẖār.

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ[38] ਊਜਲੇ[39] ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ[40] ਦਰਬਾਰਿ[41] ॥੨॥

Nānak ṯe mukẖ ūjle ṯiṯ sacẖai ḏarbār. ||2|

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 473.

From a woman[1] is our birth[2]; in a woman's[3] womb one grows[4]; to a woman[5] one is engaged[6]; to a woman one is wedded[7].
With a woman[8] one establishes friendship[9] and with a women [10] one starts life[11].
When a woman[12] is dead[13] another woman[14] is sought[15] and with a woman[16] we are attached[17] and raise a family.
Why call[20] woman[18] evil[19] who[21] gives birth[22] to kings[23] and all?

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From a woman[24] is born[26] a woman[25], without[28] woman[27] there will be none[29].
Nanak says:
There is only One[32], the Eternal[33], Who is not dependent[31] upon woman[30].
That person[34], who always[35] praises[36] the One, is very fortunate[37].
That person's face[38] glows[39] in the court[41] of God[40] (means contented).
AGGS, M 1, p 473.

13. Origin of Universe

Guru Nanak has very clearly mentioned that the universe cames into existence with the forceful bursting of stored energy in ONE (ੲਕੋ – ੴ). Forceful bursting of stored energy in **ONE** (ੲਕੋ – ੴ) is very much comparable to the Big Bang Theory of the 20th century:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ[1] ੲਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ [2] ॥

Kīṯā pasā▫o eko kavā▫o.

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ[3] ॥

Ŧis ṯe ho▫e lakẖ ḏarī▫ā▫o.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ 16, ਪੰਨਾ 3.

The universe exploded with one sound[2] (bang) and started to expand[1].
Thereafter many things[3] appeared.
AGGS, Jap 16, p 3.

Previously I have interpreted the word ਕਵਾਉ as 'sound'; in fact, it means 'bang' (the swift release of a store of effective force or energy. When the bang occurred for the first time there was no sound produced. Moreover, ਕਵਾਉ does not mean a 'Word' or 'Sabd' as usually interpreted by many authors but it means '*hukm*' (order) according to *Mahan Kosh* [32]. However, *Mahan Kosh* also says that ਕਵਾਉ is from ਕਵਾ, which means 'energy'. Almost all the scholars have ignored this meaning. Now I have modified the above interpretation while keeping in view the meaning of ਕਵਾਉ (ਕਵਾ) as 'energy' as follows:
The universe exploded from one source of energy[2] (One - Singularity) and started to expand[1]. Thereafter many things[3] appeared.
Because:
1. ਪਸਾਉ (*Pasao - Pasara*) means to expand.

2. ਕਵਾਉ (*Kavao*) usually it means 'sound', 'word', 'note', or '*hukm*' (Order'). However, here ਕਵਾਉ is from ਕਵਾ, which means energy according to *Mahan Kosh.* Therefore, ੲਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ means '*From one source of Energy'* (ੲਕੋ stands for 'Singularity', which is also

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called ‘Nothingness’).

ਦਰੀਆਉ (*Daryao*) has been literally interpreted as rivers or many living beings by many scholars. Keeping in view the methodology used by Guru Nanak to express his philosophy ‘ਦਰੀਆਉ’ has been used as a metaphor for ‘things’. What are those things? Scientifically what appeared after the Big Bang was a large number of galaxies each composed of a large number of stars (suns) and their planets? Therefore, the ‘ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ’ (*Lakh Daryao*) has been used to represent ‘many things’ because of limited vocabulary available at that time. However, one must understand that no water was formed immediately after the Big Bang. It took billions of years to form the Earth and water in our solar system – The Earth was formed first then water fell on it. Therefore, ‘ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ’ (*Lakh Daryao*) is a metaphoric expression of ‘many things’ (that means starting from elementary particles to particles to nucleosynthesis of atoms which gave rise to many galaxies.

The concept of ‘ਦਰੀਆਉ’ (*Daryao*) in Nanakian Philosophy as ‘things’ has been explained by Guru Arjan so that the metaphor, ‘ਦਰੀਆਉ’ (*Daryao*), may not be misunderstood as ‘rivers’ as has been understood by some scholars in the above phrase of Guru Nanak:

ਏਕ ਕਵਾਵੈ[1] ਤੇ ਸਭਿ[2] ਹੋਆ ॥੧॥

Ėk kavāvai ṯe sabẖ ho▫ā. ||1||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1003.

From one source of energy[1] (Singularity) everything[2] appeared.

AGGS, M 5, p 1003.

‘ਏਕ ਕਵਾਵੈ’ in the above phrase is same as ‘ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ’ of Guru Nanak’s previous phrase.

In addition, ਕਵਾਵੈ is from ਕਵਾ. ਕਵਾ means ‘energy’ according to *Mahan Kosh.*

14. Infiniteness of Universe

The universe is still expanding since the Big Bang occurred. According to the present day knowledge of science, no limit has been established. Guru Nanak explains infiniteness of universe as follows:

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

Pāṯālā pāṯāl lakẖ āgāsā āgās.

Oṛak oṛak bẖāl thake veḏ kahan ik vāṯ.

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After great research, the Vedas have said definitely that:
There are hundreds of thousands of nether worlds, and hundreds of thousands of skies.

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥

Sahas aṯẖārah kahan kaṯebā asulū ik ḏẖāṯ.
On the other hand:
The Semitic books say that there are eighteen thousand worlds and that is the fact.

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥

Lekẖā ho▫e ṯa likī▫ai lekẖai ho▫e viṇās.
Nānak vadā ākẖī▫ai āpe jāṇai āp. ||22||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ # 22, ਪ 5.

However, Nanak says:
It cannot be possible to count because the person counting may reach the end of his life while counting and even then, it will still be incomplete (since the number of the celestial bodies in the Universe is unlimited).
He further says that:
(The God) is the Great who knows the account (of the celestial bodies in the Universe).
22.
AGGS, Jap # 22, p 5.

Theme
In this stanza Guru Nanak refers to the discrepancy that the Vedas say that there are hundreds of thousands of *Patal* (nether worlds) and hundreds of thousands of skies while on the other hand the Semitic books say that there are 18,000 worlds. This is the information in the Vedas and Semitic books but these are not the views of Guru Nanak. However, some scholars and preachers erroneously interpret that it is Guru Nanak, who says that there are *lacs* (hundreds of thousands) of *Patal* (nether worlds) and *lacs* of skies.

Scientifically there is no 'nether world'; it is an ancient myth. Similarly, there is no sky. The blue color we see is the color due to the depth of the air through which the sunlight passes before coming to us. In fact, it is a void or space.

After quoting the information available as the accepted concepts of that time, thereafter, Guru Nanak says that the cosmos (the Universe) contains a countless number of celestial bodies. The real number would be only known to the God, the Creator.

According to the present scientific information available, there are billions of galaxies and each galaxy is composed of billions of stars and their planets and moons. Our Sun is one of the billions of stars of our galaxy, Milky Way, having nine planets revolving

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around it.

15. Hukm - Laws of Universe

Guru Nanak emphasizes that every action and reaction (process) or phenomenon that is happening in this universe and in all the living beings are governed under the Laws of Universe. Nothing can happen outside of these laws. Guru Nanak calls them as ਹੁਕਮ (*hukm*):

ਹੁਕਮੈ[1] ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ[2] ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Hukmai anḏar sabẖ ko bāhar hukam na ko▫e.
ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ # 2, ਪੰਨਾ 2

Every action and reaction is going on under the Laws of Nature[1].
Nothing can happen without these Laws of Nature[2].
AGGS, Jap # 2, p 2.

Guru Nanak further says that there are the same Laws of Nature throughout this Universe:

ਏਕੋ[1] ਹੁਕਮੁ[2] ਵਰਤੈ[3] ਸਭ[4] ਲੋਈ[5] ॥

ਏਕਸੁ[6] ਤੇ ਸਭ[7] ਓਪਤਿ[8] ਹੋਈ ॥੭॥

Ėko hukam varṯai sabẖ lo▫ī.
Ėkas ṯe sabẖ opaṯ ho▫ī. ||7||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 223.

The same (one)[1] Laws of Nature/Universe[2] are operating[3] in all[4] the worlds[5] (the whole Universe); since the whole Universe[7] appeared from ONE[6] - Singularity (ੴ).

AGGS, M 1, p 223.

16. Concept of God

In the philosophy of Guru Nanak God is an Abstract/Eternal/Transcendent Entity. Guru Nanak even before the beginning of time and space has reported the existence of such God:

ਆਦਿ[1] ਸਚੁ[2] ਜੁਗਾਦਿ[3] ਸਚੁ ॥

Āḏ sacẖ jugāḏ sacẖ.
ਹੈ[4] ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ[5] ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

Hai bẖī sacẖ Nānak hosī bẖī sacẖ. ||1||
ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ ਸਲੋਕ 1, ਪਨਾ 1 ਅਤੇ ਮ: 5 ਸਲੋਕ, ਪੰਨਾ 285.

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Was in existence[2] before the beginning of time and space[1];
Was in existence in the past[3]; Is in existence in the present[4];
Will remain in existence forever[5] (in the future)."
AGGS, Jap, p 1 & AGGS, M 5, p 285.

It is apparent from the above stanza that no specific/descriptive name has been assigned to this Entity, which exists forever, by Guru Nanak. However that Entity has been represented as a logo, **ੴ**, found in the Commencing Verse in the beginning of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). The Commencing Verse of the AGGS, which is commonly called *Mool Mantra* by the Sikhs at large and by almost all Sikh scholars of the AGGS, actually defines God. Chahal [47, 48] has discussed in detail that the Commencing Verse of the AGGS clearly indicates that it is not a *Mool Mantra* but a precise and concise definition (*manglacharan*) of the Abstract/Transcendent Entity. The logo, **ੴ**, is followed by its attributes which distinguishes it from other concepts of the God as follows:

ੴ

Ik Oh Beant

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

saṯ nām karṯā purakẖ nirbẖa▫o nirvair akāl mūraṯ ajūnī saibẖa'n gur parsāḏ.

The One and Only (Singularity) - That is Infinite;
Exists;
Source of every creation;
Without fear
(Not governed by any other);
Without enmity;
Timeless (Without effect of time);
Takes neither birth nor dies;
(Never comes into an anthropomorphic form)
Originated by Itself;
Enlightener; and
Bounteous.

In some religions, God incarnates in a human form with different names at different times and in most instances, the incarnated god has a wife or a consort. Guru Nanak rejects the incarnation of God into human form and the having of a wife or consort. Accordingly, God does not appear into any anthropomorphic form in Nanakian Philosophy, which is also accepted by Albert Einstein, the Noble Laureate [49].

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17. Mantra System

In the following phrases the mantra system is clearly rejected by Guru Nanak. In spite of this fact it is mostly preached by *sants/babas*) saints), preachers ,*kathakaar*s (narrators), and *kirtanias*) hymn singers) and even by many scholars that one should recite the above Commencing Verse (Mool Mantra) and certain bani from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib again and again to get their wishes fulfilled. Consequently, Sikhism is becoming a mythic and ritualistic religion. A couple of verses support the Nanakian philosophy which emphasizes that **jap** (repetition of mantra or a verse), tap (mortification), magical formulae, magical hymns, mystic characters, and religious hypocrisies are of no avail to comprehend God and to get their wishes fulfilled:

ਜਪੁ[1] ਤਪੁ[2] ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਜਮ[3] ਥਾਕੀ[4] ਹਠਿ[5] ਨਿਗ੍ਰਹਿ[6] ਨਹੀ ਪਾਈਐ[7] ॥

Jap ṯap kar kar sanjam thākī haṯẖ nigrahi nahī pā▫ī▫ai.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜਿ[8] ਮਿਲੇ[9] ਜਗਜੀਵਨ[10] ਸਤਿਗੁਰ[11] ਬੂਝ[12] ਬੁਝਾਈਐ[13] ॥੨॥

Nānak sahj mile jagjīvan saṯgur būjẖ bujẖā▫ī▫ai. ||2||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 436.

By practicing recitation ,[1]austerity [2]and self-discipline ,[3]people have grown weary ;[4]even after stubbornly [5]practicing these rituals, they still have not been able [6]to realize God .[7] God can only be realized[9] steadily[8] through the method[12] explained[13] by the True Guru[11].
AGGS, M 1, p 436.

Moreover, Guru Nanak rejects dependence on any type of mantra system in his philosophy:

ਤੰਤੁ[1] ਮੰਤੁ[2] ਪਾਖੰਡੁ[3] ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ[4] ਰਿਦੈ[5] ਮਨੁ[6] ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥

Ŧanṯ manṯ pakẖand na jāṇā rām riḏai man māni▫ā .

ਅੰਜਨੁ[7] ਨਾਮੁ[8] ਤਿਸੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਝੈ[9] ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ[10] ਸਚੁ[11] ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥੪॥

Anjan nām ṯisai ṯe sūjẖai gur sabḏī sacẖ jāni▫ā. ||4||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 766.

"I (Nanak) do not believe in magical formulae[1], magical hymns[2] (including diagrams of mystical characters - yantra-mantra) and religious hypocrisies[3], because my mind[6] is imbibed[5] with the God[4]. The collyrium[7] is the teachings of the Guru[8], that made (me) capable to understand[9] the Almighty[11] through the teachings of the Guru[10]."
AGGS, M 1, p 766.

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CONCLUSIONS

1. According to Dawe Nanak was a precocious child, showing early maturity of mind. He did not settle for the routine observance of rituals and rules. At about the age of 8 or 9 he refused to accept *janeu* (Sacred thread for Hindus worn around the neck under the arm) ceremony to be initiated as a Hindu.
2. He was taught approved writings of Muhammadans from Saiyad Hassan and learned all the earthly sciences from Khazir, the prophet Elias. He studied Hindu philosophy from trained Brahmans.
3. He was accepted as the GURU by the four Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the House of Nanak as is indicated in their bani.
4. Historically he was also accepted as Guru by Guru Hargobind and who also instructed Guru Har Rai and the Sikhs to follow Nanak as the GURU.
5. Satta Doom declared in his bani that Guru Nanak promulgated unique philosophy of highest order.
6. Macauliffe declared, "*Guru Nanak was not a priest either by birth or education, but a man who soared to the loftiest heights of divine emotionalism, and exalted his mental vision to an ethical ideal beyond the conception of Hindu or Muhammadan*."
7. Keeping in view all the information it appears that Guru Nanak has a vision to formulate new and unique philosophy even before the age of 30 – the historical time of revelation.
8. Thereafter, he started long travels throughout South Asia and Middle East to discuss his philosophy with the mentors of various religions and sects.
9. Cunningham declared, "*It was reserved for Guru Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor, "Gowind", to fire the mind of his countrymen with a new nationality and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes and aspirations*."
10. Some basic principles of philosophy of Guru Nanak have been discussed for general information to the readers.
11. Based on his unique philosophy Guru Nanak is accepted as the Founder of Sikhi – which has been anglicized as Sikhism.
12. Reference to various fictitious stories found in various *Janam Sakhis* (biographies of Guru Nanak) has been intentionally avoided to be discussed about the life and the contributions of Guru Nanak in this book.

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